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ALEXANDER POPE.

POPE'S

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

BY

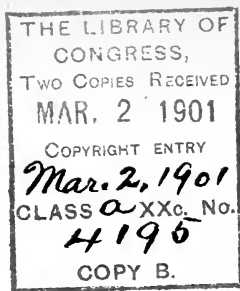
INSTRUCTOR IN ENGLISH LITERATURE IN THE CUTLER
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INTRODUCTION.



ALEXANDER POPE.

1688-1744.

“As a poet Pope was deficient in originality and creative power, and was inferior to his prototype, Dryden ; but as a literary artist, and brilliant declaimer, satirist, and moralizer in verse, he is still unrivalled. He is the English Horace.”

ALEXANDER POPE, the son of a prosperous wholesale linen merchant, was born in Lombard Street, London, May 21, 1688, the year of the great revolution. His father, though the son of a clergyman of the Church of England, during a residence on the Continent had become a Roman Catholic, and Pope was consequently educated in the Roman Catholic faith. His mother, Edith Turner, a sister-in-law of Cooper, the famous portrait painter, was of a good Yorkshire family, and Pope always claimed to be of gentle blood and deeply resented the imputation of obscure birth. In answer to a mean accusation of this sort made once by Lord Hervey, Vice Chamberlain in the Court of George II., and by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, the poet wrote with commendable spirit, and with that filial devotion which characterized his whole life: “But as to my father, I could assure you, my lord,

that he was no mechanic (neither a hatter, nor, which might please your lordship yet better, a cobbler), but in truth, of a very tolerable family; and my mother of an ancient one, as well born and educated as that lady whom your lordship made choice of to be the mother of your own children; whose merit, beauty, and vivacity (if transmitted to your posterity) will be a better present than even the noble blood they derive only from you; a mother on whom I was never obliged so far to reflect as to say she spoiled me, and a father who never found himself obliged to say of me that he disapproved my conduct: in a word, my lord, I think it enough that my parents, such as they were, never cost me a blush, and that their son, such as he is, never cost them a tear." Although in mature life Pope was on intimate terms with many people of the highest social standing, Protestants as well as Catholics, in his youth the vigorous laws against Catholics made it impossible for a boy of that faith to attend the public schools without suffering great humiliation, and Pope was accordingly educated in a very irregular way. When eight years old he became the pupil of a priest named Taverner, who taught him the rudiments of Latin and Greek. After having been under that priest for a year he was sent, he tells us, to a seminary at Twyford, and then to a school at Hyde Park Corner. Soon after his birth his father retired from business and settled at Binfield, on the skirts of Windsor Forest, and there, in 1700, when Pope was about twelve, he was placed for a few months under the instruction of a fourth priest. "This," he says, "was all the teaching

I ever had, and God knows it extended a very little way." Almost from his birth he was regarded by his parents as an intellectual prodigy, and from the age of twelve he was permitted to take his own course in the matter of his studies. He had little if any knowledge of the Greek language, but he read translations of Greek poets, and a number of the works of Latin, French, and English poets, his favorites in his own tongue being Waller, Spenser, and Dryden. The last-named poet, then an old man, was the autocrat of London literary circles and the special object of Pope's admiration, and when Pope was twelve years old he prevailed on a friend to take him to Will's Coffee House that he might see the great man. The sight of the old poet evidently made a deep impression on the boy, and it is certainly not incorrect to say that his whole life long, of writers whom he had actually known or seen, Dryden was his hero. For sixteen years Pope lived at Windsor Forest, and during that time wrote and translated much. On his return home from one of his occasional visits to London during the time, he wrote to his friend, Henry Cromwell: "If you have any curiosity to know in what manner I live, or rather, lose a life, Martial will inform you in one line:—

"Prandeo, poto, cano, ludo, lego, cæno, quiesco."

Every day with me is literally another yesterday, for it is exactly the same; it has the same business, which is poetry; and the same pleasure, which is idleness. A man might indeed pass his time much better, but I question if any man could pass it much easier."

In 1716 Pope's family sold the property at Windsor

Forest, and removed to Chiswick on the left bank of the Thames, about seven miles from London. The next year the elder Pope died, and the poet leased an estate at Twickenham, or *Twitenham*, as he preferred to write it, a beautiful spot also on the left bank of the Thames, ten miles southwest of the centre of London, and there took up his residence in 1718. From the beginning of his life at Chiswick to the publication of his "Dunciad" in 1728, Pope lived much with gay and fashionable people. He was often in London, where he was seen at the October Club and the gaming house, the close companion of several dashing young noblemen; and was a frequent visitor at the country seats of Lords Harcourt, Bathurst, and Cobham. For a couple of years he seems to have indulged in a good deal of gayety, but finding his constitution too weak for irregularity of any sort, after that he took his pleasures more moderately, and devoted his leisure time to the beautifying of his little place. In the vicinity of Twickenham lived many wealthy families, some of them of considerable rank, and with most of these Pope seems to have been on easy terms. One of his neighbors was the famous Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, a daughter of the Earl of Kingston, and with her Pope was for a long time on terms of very intimate friendship. Later, however, as is well known, this friendship was suddenly and finally interrupted. In 1733 Pope's mother died, and that sorrow, added to the estrangement of some of his old friends, made his latter years sad and depressed. He himself died May 30, 1744, and was buried, as he had requested, near his parents in Twickenham Church.

The delicacy of Pope's constitution and the deformity of his little person are as well known to students of eighteenth century literature as the peculiarities of his or his contemporaries' poetry. He was so short that it was necessary for him to have a high chair at table, and in middle life was so feeble that he had to be wrapped in flannel, wool, and fur, and laced in a stiff canvas or buckram suit by an attendant, every morning. His legs were so slender that he was obliged to wear three pairs of stockings, and even these he could not put on or off without help. Like many other deformed persons, he was suspicious, vindictive, and irritable to the last degree. "The wicked asp of Twickenham," Lady Mary Montagu called him; and his friend, Lord Chesterfield, describes him as "the most irritable of all the *genus irritabile vatum*, offended with trifles and never forgetting or forgiving them." In his intercourse with people he much preferred to accomplish his ends by artifice, and his "literary stratagems, disguises, assertions, denials, and (we must add) misrepresentations, would fill volumes. Yet Pope, when no disturbing jealousy, vanity, or rivalry intervened, was generous and affectionate, and he had a manly, independent spirit." His closest friends, as a rule, were among the greatest ornaments, not only of the literary but of the social life of London: these included Wycherly, Henry Cromwell, Addison, Gay, Arbuthnot, Bolingbroke, Oxford, Peterborough, and Swift. In the chronological table following this sketch will be found a complete list of Pope's writings, with the dates of their publication; and there it will be seen that "The Rape of the Lock" belongs to the earliest period of

his literary activity, the latter years of his residence at Windsor Forest. At that time he was acquainted chiefly with the Roman Catholic families of the metropolis, among these the Carylls of Sussex, the Fermors of Tusmore, in Oxfordshire, and the Blounts of Mapledurham, in Oxfordshire; representatives of which families figure largely in the poem in question.

Pope was essentially the poet of the town and of what is called society. "As truly," says James Russell Lowell, "as Shakespeare is the poet of man as God made him, dealing with great passions and innate motives, so truly is Pope the poet of society, the delineator of manners, the expositor of those motives which may be called acquired, whose spring is in institutions and habits of purely worldly origin." The great feature of the poetry of the so-called *Classical Age* was the exaltation of form over matter. Correctness of style, exact finish of expression, was what poets chiefly sought, and the highest exponent of the classical idea is Pope. "What came to pass in this century," says Mark Pattison in "Ward's English Poets," "was that a compromise was effected between poetry and prose, and the leading writers adopted, as the most telling form of utterance, prosaic verse, metre without poetry. It is by courtesy that the versifiers of this century, from Dryden to Churchill, are styled poets, seeing that the literature they have bequeathed to us wants just that element of inspired feeling which is present in the feeblest of the Elizabethans." "Any ideas, any thoughts, such as custom, chance, society, or sect may suggest, are good enough, but each idea must be turned over till it has been reduced to its neatest and most epigrammatic expres-

sion." This is the well-accepted verdict of our age on the poetry of Pope; yet in his own age he was placed higher than Shakespeare, and in every age he must be accepted as a great master in his art.

It is impossible to speak here in detail of the influences which led to the creation of even Pope's greatest works, the poems by means of which he has secured undying fame, except of "The Rape of the Lock." These poems are: the "Essay on Criticism," "Windsor Forest," the "Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard," "Elegy on an Unfortunate Lady," translations of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," "The Essay on Man," and "The Dunciad."

Pope has of course had many biographers, and his works have been variously edited. Among the best known editions are those of Warburton, Warton, Roscoe, and Croker. The last of these, the edition of the Right Honorable John Wilson Croker with an introduction and notes by the Reverend Whitwell Elwin and William John Courthope, M.A., is the most voluminous. It comprises ten volumes, published between 1871 and 1889. An interesting life of Pope is that of Mr. Leslie Stephen, in the "English Men of Letters Series," published first in 1880.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

[James II., 1685-1688. William and Mary, 1689-1694. William alone, 1694-1702. Anne, 1702-1714. George I., 1714-1727. George II., 1727-1760.]

1688. (May 21) Pope born in Lombard Street, London.

1700. Leaves school and goes to live with his parents at Binfield.

1709. Publishes *The Pastorals*. Translation of part of the *Iliad*.

1711. *Essay on Criticism*.

1712. *The Messiah. The Rape of the Lock* (first edition). Translations of Statius's *Thebais* (Book I.).

1713. *Windsor Forest. Ode for St. Cecilia's Day. Frenzy of John Dennis. Prologue to Cato*.

1714. *The Wife of Bath. The Rape of the Lock*, final form.

1715. *Temple of Fame*. Translation of Homer's *Iliad* (Books I.-IV.).

1716. Removes with his parents to Chiswick.

1717. *Eloisa to Abelard. Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady* (with Gay and others). Pope's father dies.

1718. Pope settles with his mother at Twickenham.

1720. Translation of the *Iliad* completed.

1723. Translation of the *Odyssey* (Vols. I., II.).

1725. Edition of Shakespeare.

1727. *Treatise on the Bathos, or Art of Sinking in Poetry*.

1728. *The Dunciad* (Books I.-III.).

1729. *The Dunciad* (with notes by Swift, Warburton, Arbuthnot, and others).

1730. *The Grub Street Journal* (published by Pope and others).

1731. *Epistle on Taste*.

1732. *Essay on Man* (Epistles I. and II.). *Moral Essays*.

1733. *Essay on Man* (Epistle III.). *Imitations of Horace*. Pope's mother dies.

1734. *Essay on Man* (Epistle IV.).

1735. *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (prologue to the *Satires*). Death of Arbuthnot. Donne's *Satires* versified. *Essay on the Character of Women* (Epistle II. of the *Moral Essays*). *Correspondence* (Curll's edition).

1737. *Imitations of Horace* (completed). *Correspondence* (authorized edition).

1738. Epilogue to the *Satires*.

1741. *Memoirs of Scriblerus*.

1742. *The Dunciad* (with the addition of a fourth book).

1743. *The Dunciad* (with Colley Cibber the hero, instead of Theobald).

1744. Death of Pope, May 30, at Twickenham.

INTRODUCTION TO "THE RAPE OF THE LOCK."

IN the earlier part of his brilliant career Pope was acquainted chiefly with the Roman Catholic families of London, and naturally the social set in which he moved was somewhat limited. Any incident, therefore, pertaining to these people was of deep interest to the poet, and with his taste and the taste of his times for artificial themes in poetry, it is not strange that he should have employed his muse on so absurd and trifling a subject as that of "The Rape of the Lock." The heroine of the poem is Miss Arabella Fermor, who in 1714 was married to Francis Perkins, Esq., of Upton Court, Berks, and who had a niece, the Prioress of the English Austin Nuns, at the Fossée at Paris. Miss Fermor seems to have been a favorite with poets, for Parnell, on her leaving London, once addressed a poem to her, commencing, "From Town fair Arabella flies." Her niece, as quoted in the "Life and Writings of Mrs. Piozzi," said that she remembered that Mr. Pope's praise made her aunt very troublesome and conceited. Mrs. Perkins died in 1738, and both her own and her father's families are extinct. Her portrait at Tusmore, an earlier residence of the Perkins', has inscribed on it some of the lines of this poem. The transgressor in the poem was Lord Petre, a fashionable young nobleman, "of small stature," whose family was

intimate with that of Miss Fermor, and who, soon after the event of the poem, married a great heiress, Miss Warmesley, and died leaving a posthumous son. Other persons conspicuously mentioned in the poem are Mrs. Morley, and her brother Sir George Brown, of Berks. The poem is dedicated to John Caryll, a gentleman of an ancient Roman Catholic family in Sussex, who until his death in 1736 was a very intimate friend of Pope's. Caryll was a nephew of the secretary of Queen Mary (wife of James II., whose fortunes he followed into France), the author of the comedy of "Sir Solomon Single," and of several translations in Dryden's miscellanies.

Either on a challenge or impelled by some sudden fancy for playing a practical joke, one day Lord Petre stealthily cut off a lock of Miss Fermor's hair, and the indignation of the lady and her friends at the trespass was so great, that before long a fine quarrel was in progress, and the theft of the curl was the topic on every tongue. So completely estranged by the incident were the two noble families directly concerned, that Caryll suggested to the poet that he use his pen in gently ridiculing the whole affair. The idea commended itself to Pope, and the poem was written in less than a fortnight and sent to Miss Fermor. It pleased the lady in question, but it is said to have utterly failed to produce the desired reconciliation.

The poem was first written in two cantos in 1711, and was so printed in 1712, but without the name of the author. It was so well received that the next year Pope added "the machinery of the sylphs" and extended it to five cantos. "His insertion," says Bishop Warburton,

“he always esteemed, and justly, the greatest effort of his skill and art as a poet.” In its final form it was first published in 1714.

The first edition of this poem is given after the notes, and the student will no doubt take pleasure in seeing exactly how the changes in it were made. The text of both is that of Pope’s friend, Bishop Warburton, to whom the poet bequeathed half his library.

ESTIMATES.

“ ‘The Rape of the Lock’ is the finest mock-heroic poem which has ever been written. The literatures of France and of Italy also possess specimens of this kind of composition which have acquired celebrity, — Boileau’s ‘Lutrin,’ a burlesque on a quarrel between two churchmen over the placing of a writing desk, and Tassoni’s ‘Secchia Rapita,’ or ‘Rape of the Bucket,’ commemorating an imaginary expedition of the Bolognese to recover a bucket taken from their public well by the heroes of Modena, a satire on the petty Italian wars of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. But neither the ‘Lutrin’ nor the ‘Secchia Rapita’ equals Pope’s satire in point of elegance and delicacy, nor exhibits such vivid pictures of modern society as are to be found in the English poem.” — *M. G. Phillips.*

“ ‘The Rape of the Lock’ is correctly termed by its author a heroicomical poem, and belongs distinctly to that class of compositions which we call *burlesque*. In other words, it applies a peculiar kind of treatment to a subject palpably and therefore ludicrously undeserving of it. It differs from poems which are mere parodies on other poems, inasmuch as it burlesques or mocks an entire *class* of poetry ;

and herein lies its superiority to a mere travesty, such as the 'Batrachomyomachia.' As its true predecessors, War-
ton notes 'The Rape of the Bucket' (1612) by Alessandro
Tassoni, and two other similar Italian works. With Boi-
leau's 'Lutrin' (translated into English by Rowe in 1708)
'The Rape of the Lock' has in common both nature of sub-
ject and method of treatment — a trivial quarrel humorously
dignified with epical importance. But while the French
poem almost rises to the level of a national satire, the Eng-
lish is rather, to adopt Roscoe's expression, a social 'pleas-
antry.' The surly cavil of Dennis, that Pope's poem wants
a moral and is on that account inferior to the 'Lutrin,'
scarcely required to be refuted with mock gravity by Dr.
Johnson, who declares that 'the freaks, and humours, and
spleen, and vanity of women, as they embroil families in
discord, and fill houses with disquiet, do more to obstruct
the happiness of life in a year than the ambition of the
clergy in many centuries.' "

— *Introduction to Globe Edition of Pope's Works.*

"A delicious little thing, — *merum sal.*" — *Joseph Addison.*

"The most exquisite monument of playful fancy that
universal literature affords." — *Thomas De Quincey.*

"This seems to be Mr. Pope's most finished production,
and is perhaps the most perfect in our language. It exhib-
its stronger powers of imagination, more harmony of num-
bers, and a greater knowledge of the world than any other
of this poet's works; and it is probable, if our country were
called upon to show a specimen of its genius to foreigners,
this would be the work fixed upon." — *Oliver Goldsmith.*

"I hope it will not be thought an exaggerated panegyric to say that 'The Rape of the Lock' is the best satire extant; that it contains the truest and liveliest picture of modern life, and that the subject is of a more elegant nature, as well as more artfully conducted, than that of any other heroicomic poem. . . . The description of the toilet is judiciously given in such magnificent turns as dignify offices performed in it. ✓ Belinda dressing is painted in as pompous a manner as Achilles arming. ✓ — *D. Warton.*

"It is the most exquisite specimen of *filigree* work ever invented. It is admirable in proportion as it is made of nothing. It is made of gauze and silver spangles. . . . No pains are spared, no profusion of ornament, no splendour of poetic diction, to set off the meanest things. The balance between the concealed irony and the assumed gravity is as nicely trimmed as the balance of power in Europe. The little is made great and the great little. . . . It is the triumph of insignificance, the apotheosis of foppery and folly." — *William Hazlitt.*

In this poem Pope "appears more purely as poet than in any other of his productions. Elsewhere he has shown more force, more wit, more reach of thought, but nowhere such a truly artistic combination of elegance and fancy. In short, the whole poem more truly deserves the name of a creation than anything Pope ever wrote. . . . It ranks by itself as one of the purest works of human fancy; whether that fancy be strictly poetical or not is another matter."

— *James Russell Lowell.*

PASSAGES OFTEN QUOTED.

What dire offence from am'rous causes springs !

What mighty contests rise from trivial things ! — CANTO I. LINE 1.

And all Arabia breathes from yonder box. — LINE 134.

On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,

Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore. — CANTO II. LINE 7.

Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,

And, like the sun, they shine on all alike. — LINE 13.

If to her share some female errors fall,

Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all. — LINE 17.

Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,

And beauty draws us with a single hair. — LINE 27.

Here thou, great Anna ! whom three realms obey,

Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes tea.

— CANTO III. LINE 7.

At ev'ry word a reputation dies. — LINE 16.

The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,

And wretches hang that jury-men may dine. — LINE 21.

Coffee, which makes the politician wise,

And see through all things with his half-shut eyes. — LINE 117.

The meeting points the sacred hair dis sever

From the fair head, for ever, and for ever ! — LINE 153.

Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,

And the nice conduct of a clouded cane. — CANTO IV. LINE 121.

Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul.

— CANTO V. LINE 34.

ARGUMENT.

CANTO I.

Belinda's morning sleep is prolonged to a somewhat late hour by Ariel, her guardian sylph, who, as the lady dreams, seems to whisper in her ear that she is surrounded by a multitude of spirits ("the light militia of the lower sky"), who attend all her actions, as they do those of women generally. These sylphs themselves were once women, who now, after death, retain their interest in the feminine vanities that occupied their minds when they had human forms. The mission of the better ones is to guard the virtue of women, of the worse, to stimulate in them pride and love of empty show. Ariel tells Belinda that in her ruling star he has read some impending misfortune to her, but just what it is he does not know. He bids her, however, most of all, beware of man. At this point Jack, her lap-dog, leaps up and wakes her with his tongue. When the lady first opens her eyes she sees a billet-doux, the reading of which quite puts out of her head all thoughts of her dream. Rising, with the help of her maid Betty she makes an elaborate toilet, the sylphs, however, unseen, assisting at every turn.

CANTO II.

In the early afternoon Belinda, radiantly beautiful, issues from the house and joins a pleasure party on a boat on the Thames. From the back of her head two graceful curls descend, and one of the party, an "adventurous Baron," is seized with an unconquerable desire to possess a curl.

For this treasure, before sunrise, he had implored heaven, building to Love an altar of twelve French romances, three garters, a glove, and all the souvenirs of his previous love affairs. With a tender missive he had lighted the pyre, and, to rouse the fire, had breathed three amorous sighs. The day is fine, and the party, wafted gently towards Hampton, are in high spirits. Ariel, however, is very sad. The impending woe to Belinda rests so heavily upon him that he summons all his subordinate sylphs and sylphids and makes a long discourse to them, in which he warns them that some dreadful evil is about to befall the lady of his care, and appoints to each some special duty in protecting her. Then he threatens a fearful doom to any sylph who shall neglect his duty. In the end of the canto the sylphs obediently descend from the sails of the boat and surround the lady's form.

CANTO III.

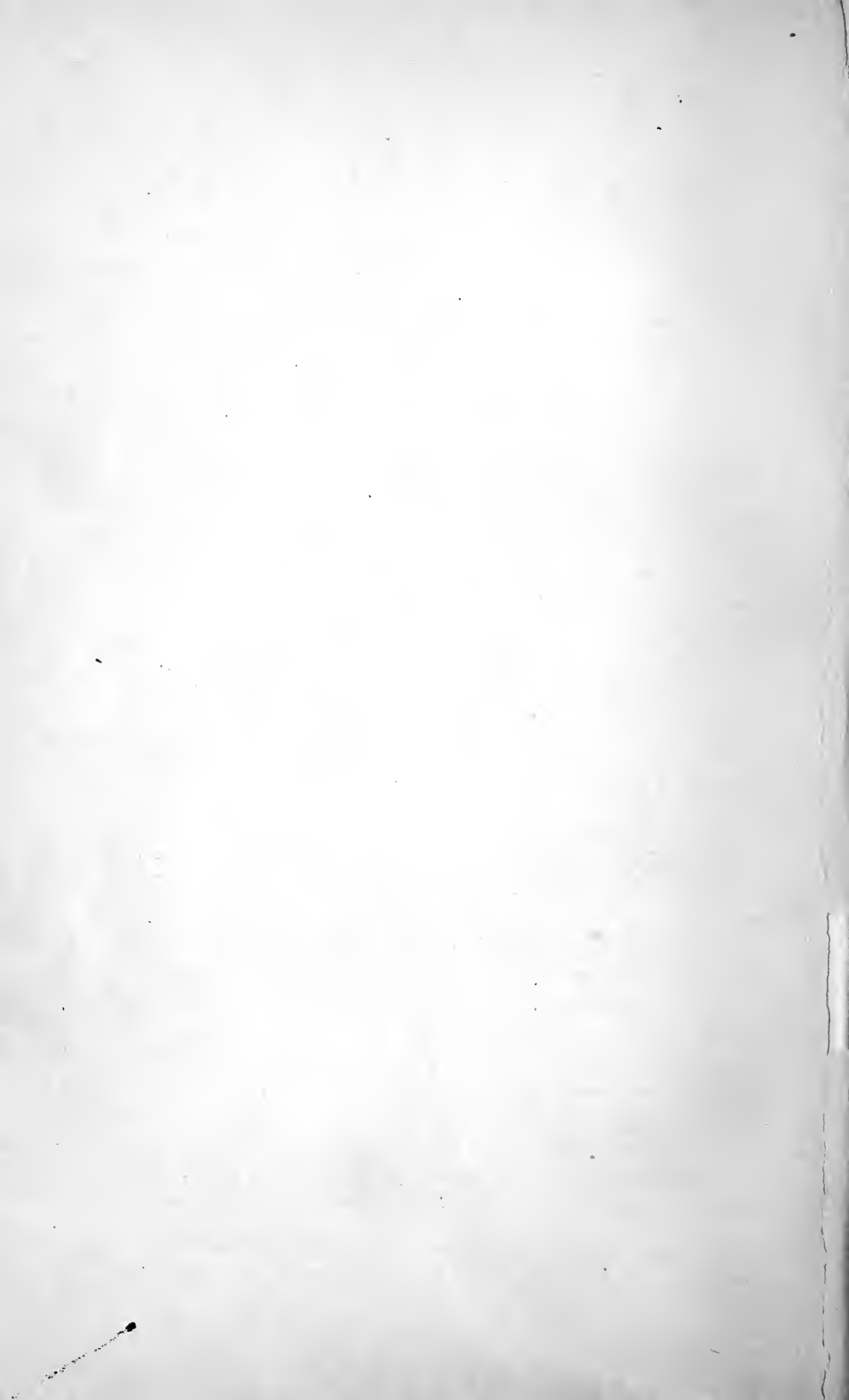
The destination of the party is Hampton Court Palace on the left bank of the Thames, and when they reach there a game of Ombre is begun. Belinda plays with the Baron and wins, and is much elated. When coffee is prepared and drunk, with its fumes in his brain the Baron becomes still more determined to secure the coveted curl. Receiving from Clarissa a pair of scissors, when Belinda is bending over her coffee he spreads them behind her neck, and, in spite of the fact that Ariel has been resting in the flowers in her bosom and that a crowd of sylphs are guarding her head, he closes them and severs the precious curl. The lady, conscious of the theft, shrieks with indignation and horror, and her assailant indulges in shouts of victory.

CANTO IV.

The sylphs having left Belinda, Umbriel, "a dusky, melancholy sprite," flies down to the centre of the earth to the gloomy cave of the goddess Spleen. From this goddess he receives a bag filled with sighs, sobs, passions, and the roar of tongues; also a vial filled with fainting fears, soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears. With these treasures Umbriel returns to daylight and finds Belinda, dejectedly and with unbound hair, reclining in Thalestris's arms. Over their heads he pours the contents of his bag and vial, and Belinda is aroused to more than mortal anger. Thalestris, with a fierce tirade, fans the flame of her wrath, and then repairing to "her beau," Sir Plume, bids him demand of the Baron the return of the lock. This Sir Plume does, but the peer is unrelenting. Belinda then utters a wild lament, and the canto closes.

CANTO V.

At Belinda's mournful wail the audience melts in tears, the Baron alone remaining unmoved. Clarissa next waves her fan for silence, and exhorts the lady to good humor, but not only is her speech unapplauded, it is received by both Belinda and Thalestris with evident disapproval. A call to arms is now sounded by Thalestris, and the whole party engage in a fierce conflict. The central figures of the conflict are Belinda and the Baron, who fight hand to hand. At last with a bodkin the lady kills her lover, but no one can find the treasured curl. In the fray it has disappeared. The Muse, in explanation, says that she has seen it shooting through the liquid air to heaven.



THE RAPE OF THE LOCK.

AN HEROI-COMICAL POEM.

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos;
Sed juvat, hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis. MART. *Epigr.* XII. 84.

TO MRS. ARABELLA FERMOR.¹

MADAM: It will be in vain to deny that I have some regard for this piece, since I dedicate it to you. Yet you may bear me witness, it was intended only to divert a few young ladies, who have good sense and good humour enough to laugh not only at their sex's little unguarded follies, but at their own. But as it was communicated with the air of a secret, it soon found its way into the world. An imperfect copy having been offer'd to a bookseller, you had the good nature for my sake to consent to the publication of one more correct: This I was forc'd to, before I had executed half my design, for the machinery was entirely wanting to compleat it.

The machinery, madam, is a term invented by the critics, to signify that part which the deities, angels, or dæmons are made to act in a poem: For the ancient poets are in one respect like many modern ladies: let an action be never so trivial in itself, they always make it appear of the utmost importance. These machines I determined to raise on a very new and odd foundation, the Rosicrucian doctrine of spirits.

I know how disagreeable it is to make use of hard words before a lady; but 'tis so much the concern of a poet to have his works understood, and particularly by your sex, that you must give me leave to explain two or three difficult terms.

The Rosicrucians are a people I must bring you acquainted with. The best account I know of them is in a French book call'd "*Le Comte de Gabalis*," which both in its title and size is so like a novel, that many of the fair sex have read it for one by mistake. According to these gentlemen, the four elements are inhabited by spirits, which they call sylphs, gnomes, nymphs, and salamanders. The gnomes or dæmons

¹ Mrs. not Miss was the title commonly given to unmarried ladies at this time. Miss was used for children, and girls not quite grown up.

of earth delight in mischief ; but the sylphs, whose habitation is in the air, are the best condition'd creatures imaginable. For they say, any mortals may enjoy the most intimate familiarities with these gentle spirits, upon a condition very easy to all true adepts, an inviolate preservation of chastity.

As to the following cantos, all the passages of them are as fabulous, as the vision at the beginning, or the transformation at the end ; (except the loss of your hair, which I always mention with reverence). The human persons are as fictitious as the airy ones ; and the character of Belinda, as it is now manag'd, resembles you in nothing but in beauty.

If this poem had as many graces as there are in your person, or in your mind, yet I could never hope it should pass thro' the world half so uncensur'd as you have done. But let its fortune be what it will, mine is happy enough, to have given me this occasion of assuring you that I am, with truest esteem, MADAM,

Your most obedient, humble servant,

A. POPE.

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK.



CANTO I.

WHAT dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
I sing — This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due:
This, even Belinda, may vouchsafe to view:
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise, 5
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.

Say what strange motive, goddess! could compel
A well-bred lord t' assault a gentle belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord? 10
In tasks so bold, can little men engage,
And in soft bosoms dwells such mighty rage?

Sol through white curtains shot a tim'rous ray,
And oped those eyes that must eclipse the day:
Now lap-dogs give themselves the rousing shake, 15
And sleepless lovers, just at twelve, awake:
Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knocked the ground,
And the pressed watch returned a silver sound.
Belinda still her downy pillow prest,
Her guardian sylph prolonged the balmy rest: 20
'Twas he had summoned to her silent bed
The morning-dream that hovered o'er her head;
A youth more glitt'ring than a birth-night beau;
(That even in slumber caused her cheek to glow)

Seemed to her ear his winning lips to lay, 25
And thus in whispers said, or seemed to say : —
“ Fairest of mortals, thou distinguished care
Of thousand bright inhabitants of air !
If e’er one vision touched thy infant thought,
Of all the nurse and all the priest have taught : 30
Of airy elves by moonlight shadows seen,
The silver token, and the circled green
Or virgins visited by angel-pow’rs,
With golden crowns and wreaths of heav’nly flow’rs ;
Hear and believe ! thy own importance know, 35
Nor bound thy narrow views to things below.
Some secret truths, from learnèd pride concealed,
To maids alone and children are revealed :
What though no credit doubting wits may give ?
The fair and innocent shall still believe. 40
Know then, unnumbered spirits round thee fly,
The light militia of the lower sky :
These, though unseen, are ever on the wing,
Hang o’er the box, and hover round the Ring.
Think what an equipage thou hast in air, 45
And view with scorn two pages and a chair.
As now your own, our beings were of old,
And once enclosed in woman’s beauteous mould ;
Thence, by a soft transition, we repair
From earthly vehicles to these of air. 50
Think not, when woman’s transient breath is fled,
That all her vanities at once are dead ;
Succeeding vanities she still regards,
And though she plays no more, o’erlooks the cards.
Her joy in gilded chariots, when alive, 55
And love of ombre, after death survive.
For when the fair in all their pride expire,
To their first elements their souls retire :
The sprites of fiery termagants in flame

Mount up, and take a salamander's name. 60
Soft yielding minds to water glide away,
And sip, with nymphs, their elemental tea.
The graver prude sinks downward to a gnome,
In search of mischief still on earth to roam.
The light coquettes in sylphs aloft repair, 65
And sport and flutter in the fields of air.

“Know further yet; whoever fair and chaste
Rejects mankind, is by some sylph embraced :
For spirits, freed from mortal laws, with ease
Assume what sexes and what shapes they please. 70
What guards the purity of melting maids,
In courtly balls, and midnight masquerades,
Safe from the treach'rous friend, the daring spark,
The glance by day, the whisper in the dark,
When kind occasion prompts their warm desires, 75
When music softens, and when dancing fires ?
'Tis but their sylph, the wise celestials know,
Though honour is the word with men below.

“Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face,
For life predestined to the gnomes' embrace. 80
These swell their prospects and exalt their pride,
When offers are disdained, and love denied :
Then gay ideas crowd the vacant brain,
While peers, and dukes, and all their sweeping train,
And garters, stars, and coronets appear, 85
And in soft sounds, 'Your Grace' salutes their ear.
'Tis these that early taint the female soul,
Instruct the eyes of young coquettes to roll,
Teach infant-cheeks a bidden blush to know,
And little hearts to flutter at a beau. 90

“Oft, when the world imagine women stray,
The sylphs through mystic mazes guide their way,
Through all the giddy circle they pursue,
And old impertinence expel by new.

What tender maid but must a victim fall 95
 To one man's treat, but for another's ball ?
 When Florio speaks what virgin could withstand,
 If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand ?
 With varying vanities, from ev'ry part,
 They shift the moving toyshop of their heart ; 100
 Where wigs with wigs, with sword-knots sword-knots strive,
 Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches drive.
 This erring mortals levity may call ;
 Oh blind to truth ! the sylphs contrive it all.

" Of these am I, who thy protection claim, 105
 A watchful sprite, and Ariel is my name.
 Late, as I ranged the crystal wilds of air,
 In the clear mirror of thy ruling star
 I saw, alas ! some dread event impend,
 Ere to the main this morning sun descend. 110
 But heaven reveals not what, or how, or where :
 Warned by the sylph, O pious maid, beware !
 This to disclose is all thy guardian can :
 Beware of all, but most beware of man ! "

He said ; when Shock, who thought she slept too long, 115
 Leaped up, and waked his mistress with his tongue.
 'Twas then, Belinda, if report say true,
 Thy eyes first opened on a billet-doux ;
 Wounds, charms, and ardours were no sooner read,
 But all the vision vanished from thy head. 120

And now, unveiled, the toilet stands displayed,
 Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
 First, robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
 With head uncovered, the cosmetic pow'rs.
 A heav'nly image in the glass appears, 125
 To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears ;
 Th' inferior priestess, at her altar's side,
 Trembling begins the sacred rites of pride.
 Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here

The various off'rings of the world appear ; 130
 From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
 And decks the goddess with the glitt'ring spoil.
 This casket India's glowing gems unlocks,
 And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
 The tortoise here and elephant unite, 135
 Transformed to combs, the speckled, and the white.
 Here files of pins extend their shining rows,
 Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billet-doux.
 Now awful beauty puts on all its arms ;
 The fair each moment rises in her charms, 140
 Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
 And calls forth all the wonders of her face ;
 Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
 And keener lightnings quicken in her eyes.
 The busy sylphs surround their darling care, 145
 These set the head, and those divide the hair,
 Some fold the sleeve, whilst others plait the gown ;
 And Betty's praised for labours not her own.

CANTO II.

Not with more glories, in th' ethereal plain,
 The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
 Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams
 Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
 Fair nymphs, and well-dressed youths around her shone, 5
 But ev'ry eye was fixed on her alone.
 On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore,
 Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
 Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
 Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those : 10
 Favours to none, to all she smiles extends ;
 Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
 Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,

And, like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride, 15
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide:
If to her share some female errors fall,
Look on her face, and you'll forget 'em all.

This nymph to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind, 20
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth iv'ry neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray, 25
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us with a single hair.

Th' advent'rous baron the bright locks admired;
He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired. 30
Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray;
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask, if fraud or force attained his ends.

For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implored 35
Propitious Heav'n, and ev'ry pow'r adored,
But chiefly Love — to Love an altar built,
Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
There lay three garters, half a pair of gloves;
And all the trophies of his former loves; 40
With tender billet-doux he lights the pyre,
And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire.
Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize:
The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his pray'r, 45
The rest, the winds dispersed in empty air.

But now secure the painted vessel glides,
The sunbeams trembling on the floating tides:

While melting music steals upon the sky,
And softened sounds along the waters die; 50
Smooth flow the waves, the zephyrs gently play,
Belinda smiled, and all the world was gay
All but the sylph — with careful thoughts opprest,
Th' impending woe sat heavy on his breast.
He summons strait his denizens of air; 55
The lucid squadrons round the sails repair:
Soft o'er the shrouds ærial whispers breathe,
That seemed but zephyrs to the train beneath.
Some to the sun their insect wings unfold,
Waft on the breeze, or sink in clouds of gold; 60
Transparent forms, too fine for mortal sight,
Their fluid bodies half dissolved in light.
Loose to the wind their airy garments flew,
Thin glitt'ring textures of the filmy dew,
Dipped in the richest tincture of the skies, 65
Where light disports in ever-mingling dyes,
While ev'ry beam new transient colours flings,
Colours that change whene'er they wave their wings.
Amid the circle, on the gilded mast,
Superior by the head, was Ariel placed; 70
His purple pinions opening to the sun,
He raised his azure wand, and thus begun:
"Ye sylphs and sylphids, to your chief give ear!
Fays, fairies, genii, elves, and demons, hear!
Ye know the spheres and various tasks assigned 75
By laws eternal to th' ærial kind.
Some in the fields of purest ether play,
And bask and whiten in the blaze of day.
Some guide the course of wand'ring orbs on high,
Or roll the planets through the boundless sky. 80
Some less refined, beneath the moon's pale light
Pursue the stars that shoot athwart the night,
Or suck the mists in grosser air below,

Or dip their pinions in the painted bow,
 Or brew fierce tempests on the wintry main, 85
 Or o'er the glebe distil the kindly rain.

Others on earth o'er human race preside,
 Watch all their ways, and all their actions guide :
 Of these the chief the care of nations own,
 And guard with arms divine the British throne. 90

“ Our humbler province is to tend the fair,
 Not a less pleasing, though less glorious care ;
 To save the powder from too rude a gale,
 Nor let th' imprisoned essences exhale ;
 To draw fresh colours from the vernal flow'rs ; 95
 To steal from rainbows ere they drop in show'rs
 A brighter wash ; to curl their waving hairs,
 Assist their blushes, and inspire their airs ;
 Nay oft, in dreams, invention we bestow,
 To change a flounce, or add a furbelow. 100

“ This day, black omens threat the brightest fair
 That e'er deserved a watchful spirit's care ;
 Some dire disaster, or by force, or slight ;
 But what, or where, the fates have wrapt in night.
 Whether the nymph shall break Diana's law, 105
 Or some frail china jar receive a flaw ;
 Or stain her honour or her new brocade ;
 Forget her pray'rs, or miss a masquerade ;
 Or lose her heart, or necklace, at a ball ;
 Or whether Heav'n has doomed that Shock must fall. 110
 Haste, then, ye spirits ! to your charge repair :
 The flutt'ring fan be Zephyretta's care :
 The drops to thee, Brillante, we consign ;
 And, Momentilla, let the watch be thine ;
 Do thou, Crispissa, tend her fav'rite lock ; 115
 Ariel himself shall be the guard of Shock.

“ To fifty chosen sylphs, of special note,
 We trust th' important charge, the petticoat :

Oft have we known that seven-fold fence to fail,
 Though stiff with hoops, and armed with ribs of whale ; 120
 Form a strong line about the silver bound,
 And guard the wide circumference around.

“ Whatever spirit, careless of his charge,
 His post neglects, or leaves the fair at large,
 Shall feel sharp vengeance soon o’ertake his sins, 125
 Be stopped in vials, or transfix’d with pins ;
 Or plunged in lakes of bitter washes lie,
 Or wedged, whole ages, in a bodkin’s eye :
 Gums and pomatums shall his flight restrain,
 While clogged he beats his silken wings in vain ; 130
 Or alum styptics with contracting pow’r
 Shrink his thin essence like a riveled flow’r :
 Or, as Ixion fixed, the wretch shall feel
 The giddy motion of the whirling mill,
 In fumes of burning chocolate shall glow, 135
 And tremble at the sea that froths below ! ”

He spoke ; the spirits from the sails descend ;
 Some, orb in orb, around the nymph extend ;
 Some thrid the mazy ringlets of her hair ;
 Some hang upon the pendants of her ear : 140
 With beating hearts the dire event they wait,
 Anxious, and trembling for the birth of fate.

CANTO III.

CLOSE by those meads, for ever crowned with flowers,
 Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers,
 There stands a structure of majestic frame,
 Which from the neighbouring Hampton takes its name.
 Here Britain’s statesmen oft the fall foredoom 5
 Of foreign tyrants and of nymphs at home ;
 Here thou, great Anna ! whom three realms obey,
 Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes tea.

Hither the heroes and the nymphs resort,
To taste awhile the pleasures of a court; 10
In various talk th' instructive hours they past,
Who gave the ball, or paid the visit last:
One speaks the glory of the British queen,
And one describes a charming Indian screen,
A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes; 15
At ev'ry word a reputation dies.
Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Meanwhile, declining from the noon of day,
The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray; 20
The hungry judges soon the sentence sign,
And wretches hang that jury-men may dine;
The merchant from th' Exchange returns in peace,
And the long labors of the toilet cease.
Belinda now, whom thirst of fame invites, 25
Burns to encounter two advent'rous knights,
At Ombre singly to decide their doom;
And swells her breast with conquests yet to come.
Straight the three bands prepare in arms to join,
Each band the number of the sacred nine. 30
Soon as she spread her hand, the aërial guard
Descend, and sit on each important card:
First Ariel perched upon a matadore,
Then each, according to the rank they bore;
For sylphs, yet mindful of their ancient race, 35
Are, as when women, wondrous fond of place.

Behold, four kings in majesty revered,
With hoary whiskers and a forky beard;
And four fair queens whose hands sustain a flow'r,
The expressive emblem of their softer pow'r; 40
Four knaves in garb succinct, a trusty band,
Caps on their heads and halberts in their hand;
And parti-colored troops, a shining train,

Draw forth to combat on the velvet plain.

The skilful nymph reviews her force with care : 45

Let spades be trumps ! she said, and trumps they were.

Now move to war her sable matadores,

In show like leaders of the swarthy Moors.

Spadillio first, unconquerable lord !

Led off two captive trumps, and swept the board. 50

As many more Manillio forced to yield,

And marched a victor from the verdant field.

Him Basto followed, but his fate more hard

Gained but one trump and one plebeian card.

With his broad sabre next, a chief in years, 55

The hoary majesty of spades appears,

Puts forth one manly leg, to sight revealed,

The rest his many-colored robe concealed.

The rebel knave, who dares his prince engage,

Proves the just victim of his royal rage. 60

Even mighty Pam, that kings and queens o'erthrew,

And mowed down armies in the fights of Lu,

Sad chance of war ! now destitute of aid,

Falls undistinguished by the victor spade !

Thus far both armies to Belinda yield ; 65

Now to the baron fate inclines the field.

His warlike amazon her host invades,

Th' imperial consort of the crown of spades.

The club's black tyrant first her victim died,

Spite of his haughty mien, and barb'rous pride : 70

What boots the regal circle on his head,

His giant limbs, in state unwieldy spread ;

That long behind he trails his pompous robe,

And, of all monarchs, only grasps the globe ?

The baron now his diamonds pours apace ; 75

The embroidered king who shows but half his face,

And his refulgent queen, with pow'rs combined

Of broken troops an easy conquest find.

Clubs, diamonds, hearts, in wild disorder seen,
With throngs promiscuous strew the level green. 80
Thus when dispersed a routed army runs,
Of Asia's troops, and Afric's sable sons,
With like confusion different nations fly,
Of various habit, and of various dye,
The pierced battalions disunited fall, 85
In heaps on heaps; one fate o'erwhelms them all.

The knave of diamonds tries his wily arts,
And wins (O shameful chance!) the queen of hearts.
At this, the blood the virgin's cheek forsook,
A livid paleness spreads o'er all her look; 90
She sees, and trembles at th' approaching ill.
Just in the jaws of ruin, and codille.
And now (as oft in some distempered state)
On one nice trick depends the gen'ral fate.
An ace of hearts steps forth: the king unseen 95
Lurked in her hand, and mourned his captive queen:
He springs to vengeance with an eager pace,
And falls like thunder on the prostrate ace.
The nymph exulting fills with shouts the sky;
The walls, the woods, and long canals reply. 100

O thoughtless mortals! ever blind to fate,
Too soon dejected, and too soon elate.
Sudden, these honours shall be snatched away,
And cursed for ever this victorious day.

For lo! the board with cups and spoons is crowned,
The berries crackle, and the mill turns round; 106
On shining altars of Japan they raise
The silver lamp; the fiery spirits blaze:
From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
While China's earth receives the smoking tide: 110
At once they gratify their scent and taste,
And frequent cups prolong the rich repast.
Straight hover round the fair her airy band;

Some, as she sipped, the fuming liquor fanned,
Some o'er her lap their careful plumes displayed, 115
Trembling, and conscious of the rich brocade.

Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
And see through all things with his half-shut eyes)
Sent up in vapours to the baron's brain
New stratagems, the radiant lock to gain. 120

Ah cease, rash youth ! desist ere 'tis too late,
Fear the just Gods, and think of Scylla's fate !
Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair !

But when to mischief mortals bend their will 125
How soon they find fit instruments of ill !
Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
A two-edged weapon from her shining case :
So ladies in romance assist their knight,
Present the spear, and arm him for the fight. 130
He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
The little engine on his fingers' ends ;

This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,
As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
Swift to the lock a thousand sprites repair, 135
A thousand wings, by turns, blow back the hair ;
And thrice they twitched the diamond in her ear ;
Thrice she looked back, and thrice the foe drew near.

Just in that instant anxious Ariel sought
The close recesses of the virgin's thought ; 140
As on the nosegay in her breast reclined,
He watched th' ideas rising in her mind,
Sudden he viewed, in spite of all her art,
An earthly lover lurking at her heart.

Amazed, confused, he found his pow'r expired, 145
Resigned to fate, and with a sigh retired.

The peer now spreads the glittering forfex wide,
T' inclose the lock ; now joins it, to divide,

Ev'n then, before the fatal engine closed,
 A wretched sylph too fondly interposed; 150
 Fate urged the shears, and cut the sylph in twain,
 (But airy substance soon unites again.)

The meeting points the sacred hair dissever
 From the fair head, for ever, and for ever!

Then flashed the living lightning from her eyes, 155
 And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies.
 Not louder shrieks to pitying Heav'n are cast,
 When husbands or when lap-dogs breathe their last;
 Or when rich china vessels fall'n from high,
 In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie! 160

"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine,
 (The victor cried) the glorious prize is mine!
 While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
 Or in a coach and six the British fair,
 As long as Atalantis shall be read, 165
 Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed,
 While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
 When num'rous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
 While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
 So long my honour, name, and praise shall live!" 170
 What time would spare, from steel receives its date,
 And monuments, like men, submit to fate!
 Steel could the labour of the gods destroy,
 And strike to dust th' imperial tow'rs of Troy;
 Steel could the works of mortal pride confound, 175
 And hew triumphal arches to the ground.
 What wonder then, fair nymph! thy hairs should feel
 The conquering force of unresisted steel?

CANTO IV.

BUT anxious cares the pensive nymph oppressed,
 And secret passions laboured in her breast.

Not youthful kings in battle seized alive,
 Not scornful virgins who their charms survive,
 Not ardent lovers robbed of all their bliss, 5
 Not ancient ladies when refused a kiss,
 Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
 Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinned awry,
 E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
 As thou, sad virgin ! for thy ravished hair. 10

For, that sad moment, when the sylphs withdrew,
 And Ariel weeping from Belinda flew,
 Umbriel, a dusky, melancholy sprite,
 As ever sullied the fair face of light,
 Down to the central earth, his proper scene, 15
 Repaired to search the gloomy cave of Spleen.

Swift on his sooty pinions flits the gnome,
 And in a vapour reached the dismal dome.
 No cheerful breeze this sullen region knows,
 The dreaded east is all the wind that blows. 20
 Here in a grotto, sheltered close from air,
 And screened in shades from day's detested glare,
 She sighs for ever on her pensive bed,
 Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head.

Two handmaids wait the throne : alike in place, 25
 But diff'ring far in figure and in face.
 Here stood Ill-nature like an ancient maid,
 Her wrinkled form in black and white arrayed ;
 With store of pray'rs for mornings, nights, and noons,
 Her hand is filled ; her bosom with lampoons. 30

There Affectation, with a sickly mien,
 Shows in her cheek the roses of eighteen,
 Practised to lisp, and hang the head aside,
 Faints into airs, and languishes with pride,
 On the rich quilt sinks with becoming woe, 35
 Wrapped in a gown, for sickness, and for show.
 The fair ones feel such maladies as these,

When each new night-dress gives a new disease.

A constant vapour o'er the palace flies ;
Strange phantoms rising as the mists arise ; 40
Dreadful, as hermits' dreams in haunted shades,
Or bright, as visions of expiring maids.
Now glaring fiends, and snakes on rolling spires,
Pale spectres, gaping tombs, and purple fires :
Now lakes of liquid gold, Elysian scenes, 45
And crystal domes, and angels in machines.

Unnumbered throngs on ev'ry side are seen,
Of bodies changed to various forms by Spleen.
Here living teapots stand, one arm held out,
One bent ; the handle this, and that the spout : 50
A pipkin there, like Homer's tripod walks ;
Here sighs a jar, and there a goose-pie talks.

Safe past the gnome through this fantastic band,
A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand.
Then thus addressed the pow'r : " Hail, wayward queen ! 55
Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen :
Parent of vapours and of female wit,
Who give th' hysteric, or poetic fit,
On various tempers act by various ways,
Make some take physic, others scribble plays ; 60
Who cause the proud their visits to delay,
And send the godly in a pet to pray.
A nymph there is, that all thy pow'r disdains,
And thousands more in equal mirth maintains.
But oh ! if e'er thy gnome could spoil a grace, 65
Or raise a pimple on a beauteous face,
Like citron-waters matrons' cheeks inflame,
Or change complexions at a losing game ;
If e'er with airy horns I planted heads,
Or rumpled petticoats, or tumbled beds, 70
Or caused suspicion when no soul was rude,
Or discomposed the head-dress of a prude,

Or e'er to costive lap-dog gave disease,
Which not the tears of brightest eyes could ease :
Hear me, and touch Belinda with chagrin, 75
That single act gives half the world the spleen."

The goddess with a discontented air
Seems to reject him, though she grants his pray'r.
A wondrous bag with both her hands she binds,
Like that where once Ulysses held the winds ; 80
There she collects the force of female lungs,
Sighs, sobs, and passions, and the war of tongues.
A vial next she fills with fainting fears,
Soft sorrows, melting griefs, and flowing tears.
The gnome rejoicing bears her gifts away, 85
Spreads his black wings, and slowly mounts to day.

Sunk in Thalestris' arms the nymph he found,
Her eyes dejected and her hair unbound.
Full o'er their heads the swelling bag he rent,
And all the furies issued at the vent. 90
Belinda burns with more than mortal ire,
And fierce Thalestris fans the rising fire.
"O wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and cried,
(While Hampton's echoes, "Wretched maid!" replied)
"Was it for this you took such constant care 95
The bodkin, comb, and essence to prepare?
For this your locks in paper durance bound,
For this with torturing irons wreathed around?
For this with fillets strained your tender head,
And bravely bore the double loads of lead? 100
Gods! shall the ravisher display your hair,
While the fops envy, and the ladies stare?
Honour forbid! at whose unrivalled shrine
Ease, pleasure, virtue, all our sex resign.
Methinks already I your tears survey, 105
Already hear the horrid things they say,
Already see you a degraded toast,

And all your honour in a whisper lost!
How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
'Twill then be infamy to seem your friend! 110
And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
Exposed through crystal to the gazing eyes,
And heightened by the diamond's circling rays,
On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
Sooner shall grass in Hyde Park Circus grow, 115
And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;
Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
Men, monkeys, lap-dogs, parrots, perish all!"

She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
And bids her beau demand the precious hairs: 120
(Sir Plume of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane)
With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
He first the snuff-box opened, then the case,
And thus broke out — "My lord, why, what the devil? 125
Zounds! d—— the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
Plague on't! 'tis past a jest — nay, prithee, pox!
Give her the hair" — he spoke, and rapped his box.

"It grieves me much" (replied the peer again)
"Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain, 130
But by this lock, this sacred lock I swear,
(Which never more shall join its parted hair;
Which never more its honours shall renew,
Clipped from the lovely head where late it grew)
That while my nostrils draw the vital air, 135
This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
The long-contended honours of her head.

But Umbriel, hateful gnome! forbears not so;
He breaks the vial whence the sorrows flow. 140
Then see! the nymph in beauteous grief appears,
Her eyes half-languishing, half-drowned in tears;

On her heaved bosom hung her drooping head,
Which, with a sigh, she raised; and thus she said :
“For ever cursed be this detested day, 145
Which snatched my best, my favourite curl away !
Happy ! ah, ten times happy had I been,
If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen !
Yet am I not the first mistaken maid,
By love of courts to numerous ills betrayed. 150
Oh, had I rather unadmired remained
In some lone isle, or distant northern land ;
Where the gilt chariot never marks the way,
Where none learn ombre, none e’er taste Bohea !
There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye, 155
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die.
What moved my mind with youthful lords to roam ?
Oh, had I stayed, and said my pray’rs at home !
'Twas this, the morning omens seemed to tell,
Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell, 160
The tott’ring china shook without a wind,
Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind !
A sylph, too, warned me of the threats of fate,
In mystic visions, now believed too late !
See the poor remnants of these slighted hairs ! 165
My hands shall rend what ev’n thy rapine spares :
These in two sable ringlets taught to break,
Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck ;
The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,
And in its fellow’s fate foresees its own ; 170
Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands,
And tempts, once more, thy sacrilegious hands.
Oh, hadst thou, cruel ! been content to seize
Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these !”

CANTO V.

SHE said : the pitying audience melt in tears,
But fate and Jove had stopped the baron's ears.

In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,
For who can move when fair Belinda fails ?

Not half so fixed the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain.

5

Then grave Clarissa graceful wayed her fan ;
Silence ensued, and thus the nymph began :

“ Say, why are beauties praised and honoured most,
The wise man's passion and the vain man's toast ?

10

Why decked with all that land and sea afford,
Why angels called, and angel-like adored ?

Why round our coaches crowd the white-gloved beaux ?
Why bows the side-box from its inmost rows ?

How vain are all these glories, all our pains,
Unless good sense preserve what beauty gains :

15

That men may say, when we the front-box grace :
‘ Behold the first in virtue as in face !’

Oh ! if to dance all night, and dress all day,
Charmed the small-pox, or chased old age away ;

20

Who would not scorn what housewife's cares produce,
Or who would learn one earthly thing of use ?

To patch, nay ogle, might become a saint,
Nor could it sure be such a sin to paint.

But since, alas ! frail beauty must decay,

25

Curled or uncurled, since locks will turn to grey ;
Since painted, or not painted, all shall fade,

And she who scorns a man, must die a maid ;

What then remains but well our pow'r to use,
And keep good-humour still, whate'er we lose ?

30

And trust me, dear ! good-humour can prevail,
When airs, and flights, and screams, and scolding fail.
Beauties in vain their pretty eyes may roll ;

Charms strike the sight, but merit wins the soul."

So spoke the dame, but no applause ensued ; 35

Belinda frowned, Thalestris called her prude.

"To arms, to arms!" the fierce virago cries,

And swift as lightning to the combat flies.

All side in parties, and begin th' attack ;

Fans clap, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack ; 40

Heroes' and heroines' shouts confusedly rise,

And bass and treble voices strike the skies.

No common weapons in their hands are found,

Like gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.

So when bold Homer makes the gods engage, 45

And heavenly breasts with human passions rage ;

'Gainst Pallas, Mars ; Latona, Hermes arms ;

And all Olympus rings with loud alarms :

Jove's thunder roars, heav'n trembles all around,

Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound : 50

Earth shakes her nodding tow'rs, the ground gives way,

And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day !

Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height

Clapped his glad wings, and sate to view the fight :

Propped on their bodkin spears, the sprites survey 55

The growing combat, or assist the fray.

While through the press enraged Thalestris flies,

And scatters death around from both her eyes,

A beau and witling perished in the throng,

One died in metaphor, and one in song. 60

"O cruel nymph ! a living death I bear,"

Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.

A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,

"Those eyes are made so killing" — was his last.

Thus on Mæander's flowery margin lies

Th' expiring swan, and as he sings he dies. 65

When bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,

Chloe stepped in, and killed him with a frown ;

She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
But, at her smile, the beau revived again. 70

Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the men's wits against the lady's hair;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.

See fierce Belinda on the baron flies, 75
With more than usual lightning in her eyes:
Nor feared the chief th' unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.
But this bold lord, with manly strength endued,
She with one finger and a thumb subdued: 80
Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw.

The gnomes direct, to ev'ry atom just,
The pungent grains of titillating dust.
Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows, 85
And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.

"Now meet thy fate," incensed Belinda cried,
And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.
(The same, his ancient personage to deck,
Her great-great-grandsire wore about his neck, 90
In three seal-rings; which after, melted down,
Formed a vast buckle for his widow's gown:
Her infant grandame's whistle next it grew,
The bells she jingled, and the whistle blew;
Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs, 95
Which long she wore, and now Belinda wears.)

"Boast not my fall" (he cried) "insulting foe!
Thou by some other shalt be laid as low:
Nor think, to die dejects my lofty mind:
All that I dread is leaving you behind! 100
Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
And burn in Cupid's flames—but burn alive."

"Restore the lock!" she cries; and all around

"Restore the lock !" the vaulted roofs rebound.
 Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain 105
 Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.
 But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,
 And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost !
 The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,
 In ev'ry place is sought, but sought in vain : 110
 With such a prize no mortal must be blest,
 So Heav'n decrees ; with Heav'n who can contest ?

Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,
 Since all things lost on earth are treasured there.
 There heroes' wits are kept in pond'rous vases, 115
 And beaux' in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.
 There broken vows and death-bed alms are found,
 And lovers' hearts with ends of riband bound,
 The courtier's promises, and sick man's pray'rs,
 The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs, 120
 Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
 Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.

But trust the Muse — she saw it upward rise,
 Though marked by none but quick, poetic eyes :
 (So Rome's great founder to the heav'ns withdrew, 125
 To Proculus alone confessed in view)
 A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
 And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
 Not Berenice's locks first rose so bright,
 The heav'ns bespangling with dishevelled light. 130
 The sylphs behold it kindling as it flies,
 And pleased pursue its progress through the skies.

This the beau monde shall from the Mall survey,
 And hail with music its propitious ray ;
 This the blest lover shall for Venus take, 135
 And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake.
 This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
 When next he looks through Galileo's eyes ;

And hence the egregious wizzard shall foredoom
The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome. 140

Then cease, bright nymph ! to mourn thy ravished hair,
Which adds new glory to the shining sphere !
Not all the tresses that fair head can boast,
Shall draw such envy as the lock you lost. 145
For after all the murders of your eye,
When, after millions slain, yourself shall die :
When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
And all those tresses shall be laid in dust,
This lock the Muse shall consecrate to fame,
And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name. 150

NOTES.



CANTO I.

Line 3. "This verse to Caryll, Muse! is due." As has been said in the introduction, the dedication of this poem was to John Caryll, a gentleman of an ancient Roman Catholic family in Sussex, who until his death, in 1736, was an intimate friend of Pope's. Of the characters introduced, Belinda was Mrs. (Miss) Arabella Fermor, a lady conspicuous in society; the Baron was Lord Petre, a fashionable young nobleman, who soon after married an heiress, Mrs. Warmesley, and died leaving a posthumous son. Thalestris was Mrs. Morley; and Sir Plume was her brother, Sir George Brown, of Berkshire. It is said that Sir George Brown was the only person offended by the poem. He was indignant at being made to appear and talk like an idiot.

Line 7. "could compel." *Impel* would be better.

Line 17. "Thrice rung the bell, the slipper knocked the ground." Belinda rang a hand-bell for her maid, and then, not being answered, knocked with her slipper. Bells were not hung in houses until long after this date. It was customary to summon servants either by the hand-bell, or by knocking with a high-heeled slipper. The watch was a repeater.

Line 20. "Her guardian sylph prolonged the balmy rest." According to the popular belief of the Middle Ages there were four sorts of "elemental spirits" who ruled in nature. The spirits of fire were called salamanders; those of water, undines; those of the air, sylphs; and those of the earth, gnomes. These beings entered into the fantastic mythological systems of various philosophers like Paracelsus. Darwin in his "Loves of the Plants," like Pope, has drawn upon "the more pleasing associations of this curious branch of mythology." See Paracelsus' "Liber de Nymphis, Sylphis, Pygmœis et Salamandris et Cæteris Spiritibus."

In his introductory letter to Miss Fermor, Pope states that he has drawn his "machinery" from the Rosicrucians.

“Pope did not introduce his *machines* with a view to influence the action of the poem, which was complete without them, but partly in order to point the satire by adding fresh dignity to the trifling details of which it was composed, and partly to heighten the beauty and brilliancy of the general effect. . . . The appearance of the Sylph in Belinda’s dream, warning her of impending calamity ; the vision driven out of her head by her *billet-doux* ; the delightful description of the Sylphs attiring Belinda in her charms ; ‘Betty praised for labours not her own’ ; the speech of Ariel in the cordage of the barge ; the flutter and commotion of the airy ministers as the Baron approaches the lock with the extended scissors, — all this helps to convert what was originally only an amusingly mock-heroic account of a single action into an exquisitely delicate and extended satire on the fashionable frivolities of female life. The unity of the whole is admirably preserved by Belinda’s sudden recollection, when too late, of the warning vision of the Sylph.” — ELWIN AND COURTHOPE.

All the lines of this Canto that follow line 18 were added later. The inconsistency of having Belinda awake in line 17 and still asleep in line 19 is most apparent.

Line 23. “A youth more glitt’ring than a birth-night beau.” Courtiers appeared in their gayest dresses on the celebration of the birthday of the king or queen, or of the Prince or Princess of Wales. There are many allusions in contemporary literature to the magnificence of the dresses at these birth-night balls.

Line 32. “The silver token, and the circled green.” The silver token was the bit of silver that fairies were said to drop into the shoes of maids who kept the house clean and tidy. The circled green was the circle, of a deeper green than the rest of the pasture, caused by the dancing of the elves at midnight.

Line 44. “Hang o’er the box, and hover round the Ring.” The box at the theatre, and the drive in Hyde Park called the Ring, were the two places where beauty and fashion were most displayed.

“Wilt thou still sparkle in the box
Or ogle in the ring?”

— Lord Dorset’s *Lines on Lady Dorchester*.

Line 47. “As now your own, our beings were of old.” Pope here leaves the Rosicrucian philosophy, and on the basis of the Platonic doctrine of the continuance of the passions in another state, invents a

fiction of the transformation of women after death into salamanders, sylphs, and gnomes.

Line 78. "Though honour is the word with men below." This is a parody of Homer.

Line 79. "Some nymphs there are, too conscious of their face." Too sensible of their beauty.

Line 105. "Of these am I, who thy protection claim." This means, "I claim to protect thee."

Line 108. "In the clear mirror." The language of the Platonists, the writers of the intelligible world of Spirits. — POPE.

Line 124. "The cosmetic pow'rs." The subject of cosmetics among the ancients was an important branch of medicine. Works on the subject were dedicated by their physicians to women of note, such as Cleopatra, and Plotina, the wife of Trajan. In Böttiger's "Sabina," note to Chapter I., is a description of a Roman beauty's toilet, which should be compared with Pope's.

Line 127. "Th' inferior priestess." Here Pope makes Belinda a priestess; in line 132, he makes her the goddess herself.

Line 130. "The various off'rings of the world appear." Dr. Warton says: "The single dress of a woman of quality is often the product of a hundred climates. The muff and fan come together from the different ends of the earth. The scarf is sent from the torrid zone, and the tippet from beneath the pole. The brocade petticoat arises out of the mines of Peru, and the diamond necklace out of the bowels of Indostan."

Line 145. "The busy sylphs surround their darling care." Ancient Jewish traditions relate that several of the fallen angels, among them Asael, who loved Naamah, the wife of Noah, or of Ham, became amorous of women. Naamah, it is said in these traditions, still presides over women's toilets.

CANTO II.

Line 28. "And beauty draws us with a single hair." Dryden's "Persius," verse 247, has:—

"She knows her man, and when you rant and swear,
Can draw you to her with a single hair."

Line 45. "The pow'rs gave ear." See Virgil's "Æneid," XI., verses 794–795.

Line 74. "Fays, fairies, genii, elves, and demons, hear!" This

is like Satan's address to the "Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers," in "Paradise Lost."

Line 90. "And guard with arms divine the British throne." This is a compliment to Queen Anne, whom he elsewhere lavishly praises.

Line 118. "We trust th' important charge, the petticoat." In the 127th number of the *Spectator*, Addison has a delicious piece of railery on this part of the female dress. In spite of Addison's ridicule, however, the hoop petticoat remained in fashion till the death of Queen Charlotte.

CANTO III.

Line 2. "Where Thames with pride surveys his rising towers." Hampton Court Palace stands about a mile from the village of Hampton, in Middlesex, on the left bank of the Thames, about twelve miles southwest of London. The original palace was erected by Cardinal Wolsey, in the height of his greatness, about 1514, and later came into possession of Henry VIII., who enlarged it. Here Edward VI. was born, and here his mother, Jane Seymour, died. Of the Stuarts, Charles I. was for some time confined in it, and Charles II. and James II. occasionally made it their residence. When William III. came to the throne he rebuilt a considerable part of it, and laid out the park and gardens in the formal Dutch style. The palace is now occupied chiefly by royal personages dependent upon the queen.

Line 8. "and sometimes tea." Tea was first used in England about the middle of the seventeenth century. It was at this time indiscriminately spelled tea, thea, tee, or tay, and pronounced as here, as if rhyming with obey and pay. Both Pope and Gay so use it.

Line 22. "And wretches hang that jury-men may dine." This line is said to be from Congreve.

Line 25. The whole account of the game of ombre, from line 25 to line 105, was added after the poem was first published. The episode was suggested, Warburton says, by Vida's description of a game of chess, in his poem entitled "*Scacchiæ Ludus*."

Line 27. "At Ombre singly to decide their doom." Ombre was a game of cards, usually played by three persons. From the terms used in it there can be little doubt that it came to Western Europe from Spain. These terms are, *Basto*, *Manillio*, *Matador*, *Spadillio*, *Punto*, etc. *Spadillio*, the ace of spades, was the first trump in the game. *Manillio*, the deuce of trumps when trumps were black, the seven when they were red, was the second trump. *Basto*, the ace of clubs, was the third trump. *Spadillio*, *Manillio*, and *Basto*

are called *Matadores*. *Codille* (in line 92 of this canto) is another term used in ombre. When those who defend the pool make more tricks than those who defend the game, they are said to win the *codille*.

“The finest passage in the whole of the ‘Rape of the Lock’ is undoubtedly the game at ombre, in which every turn of the play is described with scientific exactness, and at the same time with epic loftiness. The episode was suggested by Vida’s ‘*Scacchiæ Ludus*,’ which is in itself a masterpiece of ingenuity. In this poem Oceanus, having invited the gods and goddesses to his marriage with Tellus, entertains them with chess, a game hitherto unknown to them.” —

ELWIN AND COURTHOPE.

Line 61. “Ev’n mighty Pam, that kings and queens o’erthrew.” In certain games of cards, the knave of clubs is called *Pam*.

Line 62. “And mowed down armies in the fights of Lu.” *Lu* is the game of *Loo*, in which *Pam* is the highest card.

Lines 71–74. These lines are a parody of certain passages in Virgil.

Line 106. “The berries crackle, and the mill turns round.” Coffee is said to have been made known to Europe by Ranowolf, a German physician of the sixteenth century, in his travels published in 1573. Soon after this date, coffee houses arose in many places on the continent, but the first coffee house in London was opened in Newman’s Court, Cornhill, in 1652, by a Greek named Pasquet, who brought some coffee with him from Smyrna. Immediately his house became thronged with people eager to taste the beverage. In Pope’s time, as is well known, the London coffee houses were the resorts of all the wits. From this line in the “Rape of the Lock,” it seems as if the berries were not only ground and steeped, but roasted, on the table. Pope, like Voltaire, is said to have been extremely fond of coffee, and like Dr. Johnson with his tea, to have indulged in its use excessively.

Line 118. “And see through all things with his half-shut eyes.” This line evidently thrusts at the blindness of politicians.

Line 122. “and think of Scylla’s fate.” Compare Ovid, “*Metamorphoses*,” VIII.

Line 152. “But airy substance soon unites again.” “Paradise Lost,” Book VI., describes Satan as thus cut asunder by the angel Michael.

Line 165. “As long as Atalantis shall be read.” “Atalantis” was a famous book written about this time by a certain Mrs. Manley, a woman of doubtful reputation, for whose play of “*Lucius*” Prior wrote “a most impudent Epilogue.” “As a political journalist, she coöper-

erated with Swift and his Tory friends; and both Swift and Smollett were, as novelists, under real obligations to her 'New Atalantis.' She died in 1724." Warburton says of "Atalantis": "A famous book written about that time by a woman; full of Court and Party scandal; and in a loose effeminacy of style and sentiment, which well suited the debauched taste of the better vulgar." Mrs. Manley was the daughter of Sir Roger Manley, governor of Guernsey, and was known and admired by all the wits of the time.

Line 166. "Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed." In the eighteenth century ladies often received forenoon visits in their bed-chambers, when the bed was covered with a richer counterpane than usual, and "graced" with a small pillow with a handsomely embroidered or worked case edged with lace.

CANTO IV.

Line 10. All the lines from the 10th to the 94th are wanting in the first edition. In their place came only these:—

"While her racked soul repose and peace requires,
The fierce Thalestris fans the rising fires."

Line 16. "Repaired to search the gloomy cave of Spleen." In this line and in line 22, Pope seems to have had in mind the Cave of Envy in Ovid, "*Metamorphoses*," 760.

Line 20. "The dreaded east is all the wind that blows." Spleen was thought to be engendered by the east wind.

Line 24. "Pain at her side, and Megrim at her head." For *megrim* the first edition has *languor*. In eighteenth century novels, it is common to find fashionable women with *vapours*, or *spleen*, or *megrims*.

Line 38. "When each new night-dress gives a new disease." Pope's *gown* and *night-dress* are our dressing gown.

Line 46. "And crystal domes, and angels in machines." In Pope's time supernatural agents introduced into a romance or a play were termed the *machinery* or *machine*. The expression "angels in machines" means angels interposing in human affairs.

Line 54. "A branch of healing spleenwort in his hand." Spleenwort is a species of fern. The plant used to be considered a remedy for hypochondriacal disorders.

Line 56. "Who rule the sex to fifty from fifteen." A violation of grammar not uncommon with Pope.

Line 57. "Parent of vapours and of female wit." English melan-

choly was supposed to be caused principally by atmospheric vapors, hence this name.

Line 67. "Like citron-waters matrons' cheeks inflame." Citron-water was a cordial distilled from a mixture of spirit of wine with the rind of citrons and lemons. Women of fashion in Pope's time were very fond of this drink.

Line 100. "And bravely bore the double loads of lead." Ladies used to fasten their curl papers with little strips of pliant lead.

Line 119. "She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs." Sir Plume, as has already been explained, was Sir George Brown. He was, very properly, angry at the part he was made to play in the poem. It was not unusual with Pope to take unwarrantable liberties with people.

Line 140. "He breaks the vial whence the sorrows flow." At line 91 Umbriel empties the bag which contains the angry passions over the heads of Thalestris and Belinda. In this line he breaks the vial of sorrow over Belinda alone; so Belinda's anger is turned to grief, while Thalestris remains indignant.

Line 160. "Thrice from my trembling hand the patch-box fell." The object of black patches was probably to make the complexion look fairer by contrast. In "Palamon and Arcite," Dryden says:—

"Some sprinkled freckles on his face were seen,
Whose dusk set off the whiteness of his skin."

CANTO V.

Line 6. "While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain." This refers to the entreaties to stay with Anna, Dido's sister, that were addressed to Æneas. Virgil's "Æneid," IV. v. 330.

Line 7. "Then grave Clarissa graceful waved her fan." Pope says that Clarissa is a new character, "introduced in subsequent editions, to open more clearly the moral of the poem."

Line 37. "'To arms, to arms!' the fierce virago cries."

"Even masterpieces have their weak points, and the weakest point in 'The Rape of the Lock' is obviously the battle between the men and the ladies. . . . A structure so airy and delicate as 'The Rape of the Lock' could not have borne anything so brutal as real blows and wounds. Pope, therefore, is reduced to represent a kind of allegorical fight, in which the pleasantry is eked out, as far as may be, by puns and double meanings." — ELWIN AND COURTHOPE.

Line 45. "So when bold Homer makes the gods engage." See the twentieth book of the "Iliad."

Line 53. "Triumphant Umbriel on a sconce's height." Minerva in like manner, during the battle of Ulysses with the suitors in the "Odyssey," perches on a beam of the roof to behold. — POPE.

Line 60. "One died in metaphor, and one in song." John Dennis said that *a real combat with a metaphorical dying*, was very ludicrous. Dr. Johnson said that this was perhaps a fault, but that the faults of the poem could not be considered when its excellences were so great.

Line 95. "Then in a bodkin graced her mother's hairs." Pins to adorn the hair were called bodkins.

Line 102. "And burn in Cupid's flames — but burn alive." "Who," asked John Dennis, "ever heard of a dead man that burnt in Cupid's flames!"

Line 133. "This the beau monde shall from the Mall survey." The fashionable evening promenade was the Mall, on the north side of St. James's Park.

Line 136. "And send up vows from Rosamonda's lake." Rosamond's Lake was a small, oblong piece of water near the Pimlico Gate of St. James's Park.

Line 137. "This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies." John Partridge was a notable figure at this time. He was a ridiculous star gazer, who, in an almanac he published every year, never failed to predict the downfall of the Pope, and the king of France, who was then at war with England. After the publication of Swift's "immortal prediction" of Partridge's own death, put forth under the name of Bickerstaff in 1707, the prophet was the butt of ridicule of all Swift's friends.

FIRST EDITION
OF
THE RAPE OF THE LOCK.

Nolueram, Belinda, tuos violare capillos
Sed juvat, hoc precibus me tribuisse tuis. — MART.



THE RAPE OF THE LOCK.

CANTO I.

WHAT dire offence from am'rous causes springs,
What mighty quarrels rise from trivial things,
I sing — This verse to C—l, Muse! is due :
This, ev'n Belinda may vouchsafe to view :
Slight is the subject, but not so the praise, 5
If she inspire, and he approve my lays.
Say what strange motive, goddess! could compel
A well-bred lord t' assault a gentle belle?
O say what stranger cause, yet unexplored,
Could make a gentle belle reject a lord? 10
And dwells such rage in softest bosoms then,
And lodge such daring souls in little men?
Sol through white curtains did his beams display,
And ope'd those eyes which brighter shine than they,
Shock just had giv'n himself the rousing shake, 15
And nymphs prepared their chocolate to take;
Thrice the wrought slipper knocked against the ground,
And striking watches the tenth hour resound.
Belinda rose, and midst attending dames,
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames : 20
A train of well-dressed youths around her shone,
And ev'ry eye was fixed on her alone :
On her white breast a sparkling cross she wore
Which Jews might kiss and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose, 25
Quick as her eyes, and as unfixed as those :
Favours to none, to all she smiles extends;
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
And, like the sun, they shine on all alike. 30
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,

Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide :
 If to her share some female errors fall,
 Look on her face, and you 'll forgive 'em all.

This nymph, to the destruction of mankind, 35
 Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind
 In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
 With shining ringlets her smooth iv'ry neck.
 Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
 And mighty hearts are held in slender chains. 40
 With hairy springes we the birds betray,
 Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey,
 Fair tresses man's imperial race insnare,
 And beauty draws us with a single hair.

Th' adventurous baron the bright locks admired ; 45
 He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired.
 Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
 By force to ravish, or by fraud betray ;
 For when success a lover's toil attends,
 Few ask if fraud or force attained his ends. 50

For this, ere Phœbus rose, he had implored
 Propitious heav'n, and every pow'r adored,
 But chiefly Love — to Love an altar built,
 Of twelve vast French romances, neatly gilt.
 There lay the sword-knot Sylvia's hands had sewn 55
 With Flavia's busk that oft had wrapped his own :
 A fan, a garter, half a pair of gloves,
 And all the trophies of his former loves.
 With tender billets-doux he lights the pire,
 And breathes three am'rous sighs to raise the fire. 60
 Then prostrate falls, and begs with ardent eyes
 Soon to obtain, and long possess the prize :
 The pow'rs gave ear, and granted half his pray'r,
 The rest the winds dispersed in empty air.

Close by those meads, for ever crowned with flow'rs, 65
 Where Thames with pride surveys his rising tow'rs,
 There stands a structure of majestic frame,
 Which from the neighb'ring Hampton takes its name.
 Here Britain's statesmen oft the fall foredoom
 Of foreign tyrants, and of nymphs at home ; 70
 Here thou, great Anna ! whom three realms obey,
 Dost sometimes counsel take — and sometimes tea.

Hither our nymphs and heroes did resort,
 To taste awhile the pleasures of a court ;
 In various talk the cheerful hours they passed, 75
 Of who was bit, or who capotted last ;
 This speaks the glory of the British queen,
 And that describes a charming Indian screen ;
 A third interprets motions, looks, and eyes ;
 At ev'ry word a reputation dies. 80

Snuff, or the fan, supply each pause of chat,
 With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that.

Now when, declining from the noon of day,
 The sun obliquely shoots his burning ray ;
 When hungry judges soon the sentence sign, 85
 And wretches hang that jurymen may dine ;
 When merchants from th' Exchange return in peace,
 And the long labours of the toilet cease,
 The board 's with cups and spoons, alternate, crowned,
 The berries crackle, and the mill turns round . 90

On shining altars of Japan they raise
 The silver lamp, and fiery spirits blaze :
 From silver spouts the grateful liquors glide,
 While China's earth receives the smoking tide.
 At once they gratify their smell and taste, 95
 While frequent cups prolong the rich repast.

Coffee (which makes the politician wise,
 And see through all things with his half-shut eyes)
 Sent up in vapours to the baron's brain
 New stratagems, the radiant lock to gain. 100

Ah cease, rash youth ! desist ere 't is too late,
 Fear the just gods, and think of Scylla's fate !
 Changed to a bird, and sent to flit in air,
 She dearly pays for Nisus' injured hair !

But when to mischief mortals bend their mind, 105
 How soon fit instruments of ill they find !

Just then, Clarissa drew with tempting grace
 A two-edged weapon from her shining case :
 So ladies, in romance, assist their knight,
 Present the spear, and arm him for the fight ; 110
 He takes the gift with rev'rence, and extends
 The little engine on his fingers' ends ;
 This just behind Belinda's neck he spread,

As o'er the fragrant steams she bends her head.
 He first expands the glitt'ring forfex wide 115
 T' enclose the lock ; then joins it, to divide ;
 One fatal stroke the sacred hair does sever
 From the fair head, for ever, and for ever !

The living fires come flashing from her eyes,
 And screams of horror rend th' affrighted skies. 120
 Not louder shrieks by dames to heav'n are cast,
 When husbands die, or lapdogs breathe their last ;
 Or when rich china vessels, fall'n from high,
 In glitt'ring dust and painted fragments lie !

"Let wreaths of triumph now my temples twine," 125
 The victor cried, "the glorious prize is mine !
 While fish in streams, or birds delight in air,
 Or in a coach and six the British fair,
 As long as Atalantis shall be read,
 Or the small pillow grace a lady's bed, 130
 While visits shall be paid on solemn days,
 When num'rous wax-lights in bright order blaze,
 While nymphs take treats, or assignations give,
 So long my honour, name, and praise shall live !"

What time would spare, from steel receives its date, 135
 And monuments, like men, submit to fate !
 Steel did the labour of the gods destroy,
 And strike to dust th' aspiring tow'rs of Troy ;
 Steel could the works of mortal pride confound,
 And hew triumphal arches to the ground. 140
 What wonder then, fair nymph ! thy hairs should feel
 The conqu'ring force of unresisted steel ?

CANTO II.

BUT anxious cares the pensive nymph oppressed,
 And secret passions laboured in her breast.
 Not youthful kings in battle seized alive,
 Not scornful virgins who their charms survive, 5
 Not ardent lover robbed of all his bliss,
 Not ancient lady when refused a kiss,
 Not tyrants fierce that unrepenting die,
 Not Cynthia when her manteau's pinned awry,
 E'er felt such rage, resentment, and despair,
 As thou, sad virgin ! for thy ravished hair. 10

While her racked soul repose and peace requires,
 The fierce Thalestris fans the rising fires.
 "O wretched maid!" she spread her hands, and cried,
 (And Hampton's echoes, "Wretched maid!" replied)
 "Was it for this you took such constant care 15
 Combs, bodkins, leads, pomatums to prepare?
 For this your locks in paper durance bound?
 For this with tort'ring irons wreathed around?
 Oh had the youth been but content to seize
 Hairs less in sight, or any hairs but these! 20
 Gods! shall the ravisher display this hair,
 While the fops envy, and the ladies stare!
 Honour forbid! at whose unrivalled shrine
 Ease, pleasure, virtue, all, our sex resign.
 Methinks already I your tears survey, 25
 Already hear the horrid things they say,
 Already see you a degraded toast,
 And all your honour in a whisper lost!
 How shall I, then, your helpless fame defend?
 'T will then be infamy to seem your friend! 30
 And shall this prize, th' inestimable prize,
 Exposed through crystal to the gazing eyes,
 And heightened by the diamond's circling rays,
 On that rapacious hand for ever blaze?
 Sooner shall grass in Hyde Park Circus grow, 35
 And wits take lodgings in the sound of Bow;
 Sooner let earth, air, sea, to chaos fall,
 Men, monkeys, lapdogs, parrots, perish all!"
 She said; then raging to Sir Plume repairs,
 And bids her beau demand the precious hairs: 40
 Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
 And the nice conduct of a clouded cane,
 With earnest eyes, and round unthinking face,
 He first the snuff-box opened, then the case,
 And thus broke out — "My lord, why, what the devil! 45
 Zounds! damn the lock! 'fore Gad, you must be civil!
 Plague on 't! 't is past a jest — nay, prithee, pox!
 Give her the hair." — He spoke, and rapped his box.
 "It grieves me much," replied the peer again,
 "Who speaks so well should ever speak in vain: 50
 But by this lock, this sacred lock, I swear,

(Which never more shall join its parted hair ;
 Which never more its honours shall renew,
 Clipped from the lovely head where once it grew)
 That, while my nostrils draw the vital air, 55
 This hand, which won it, shall for ever wear."
 He spoke, and speaking, in proud triumph spread
 The long-contended honours of her head.

But see ! the nymph in sorrow's pomp appears,
 Her eyes half-languishing, half drowned in tears ; 60
 Now livid pale her cheeks, now glowing red
 On her heaved bosom hung her drooping head, }
 Which with a sigh she raised, and thus she said :

"For ever cursed be this detested day,
 Which snatched my best, my fav'rite curl away ; 65

Happy ! ah ten times happy had I been,
 If Hampton Court these eyes had never seen !

Yet am not I the first mistaken maid,
 By love of courts to num'rous ills betrayed.

O had I rather unadmired remained 70

In some lone isle, or distant northern land,
 Where the gilt chariot never marked the way,
 Where none learn ombre, none e'er taste bohea !

There kept my charms concealed from mortal eye,
 Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die. 75

What moved my mind with youthful lords to roam ?

O had I stayed, and said my pray'rs at home !

'T was this the morning omens did foretell,

Thrice from my trembling hand the patchbox fell ;
 The tott'ring china shook without a wind, 80

Nay, Poll sat mute, and Shock was most unkind !

See the poor remnants of this slighted hair !

My hands shall rend what ev'n thy own did spare :

This in two sable ringlets taught to break,
 Once gave new beauties to the snowy neck ; 85

The sister-lock now sits uncouth, alone,

And in its fellow's fate foresees its own ;

Uncurled it hangs, the fatal shears demands,

And tempts once more thy sacrilegious hands."

She said : the pitying audience melt in tears ; 90

But fate and Jove had stopped the baron's ears.

In vain Thalestris with reproach assails,

For who can move when fair Belinda fails ?

Not half so fixed the Trojan could remain,
While Anna begged and Dido raged in vain. 95

“To arms, to arms !” the bold Thalestris cries,
And swift as lightning to the combat flies.
All side in parties, and begin th’ attack ;
Fans clasp, silks rustle, and tough whalebones crack ;
Heroes’ and heroines’ shouts confus’dly rise, 100
And bass and treble voices strike the skies ;
No common weapons in their hands are found,
Like gods they fight, nor dread a mortal wound.

So when bold Homer makes the gods engage,
And heav’nly breasts with human passions rage, 105
’Gainst Pallas, Mars ; Latona, Hermes arms,
And all Olympus rings with loud alarms ;
Jove’s thunder roars, heav’n trembles all around,
Blue Neptune storms, the bellowing deeps resound :
Earth shakes her nodding tow’rs, the ground gives way, 110
And the pale ghosts start at the flash of day !

While through the press enraged Thalestris flies,
And scatters death around from both her eyes,
A beau and witling perished in the throng,
One died in metaphor, and one in song. 115
“O cruel nymph ; a living death I bear,”
Cried Dapperwit, and sunk beside his chair.
A mournful glance Sir Fopling upwards cast,
“Those eyes are made so killing” — was his last.
Thus on Mæander’s flow’ry margin lies 120
Th’ expiring swan, and as he sings he dies.

As bold Sir Plume had drawn Clarissa down,
Chloe stepped in, and killed him with a frown ;
She smiled to see the doughty hero slain,
But at her smile the beau revived again. 125

Now Jove suspends his golden scales in air,
Weighs the men’s wits against the lady’s hair ;
The doubtful beam long nods from side to side ;
At length the wits mount up, the hairs subside.

See fierce Belinda on the baron flies, 130
With more than usual lightning in her eyes :
Nor feared the chief th’ unequal fight to try,
Who sought no more than on his foe to die.

But this bold lord, with manly strength endued,
 She with one finger and a thumb subdued : 135
 Just where the breath of life his nostrils drew,
 A charge of snuff the wily virgin threw ;
 Sudden, with starting tears each eye o'erflows,
 And the high dome re-echoes to his nose.

“Now meet thy fate,” th’ incensed virago cried, 140
 And drew a deadly bodkin from her side.

“Boast not my fall,” he said, “insulting foe !
 Thou by some other shalt be laid as low ;
 Nor think to die dejects my lofty mind ;
 All that I dread is leaving you behind ! 145
 Rather than so, ah let me still survive,
 And still burn on, in Cupid’s flames, alive.”

“Restore the lock !” she cries ; and all around
 “Restore the lock !” the vaulted roofs rebound. 150
 Not fierce Othello in so loud a strain

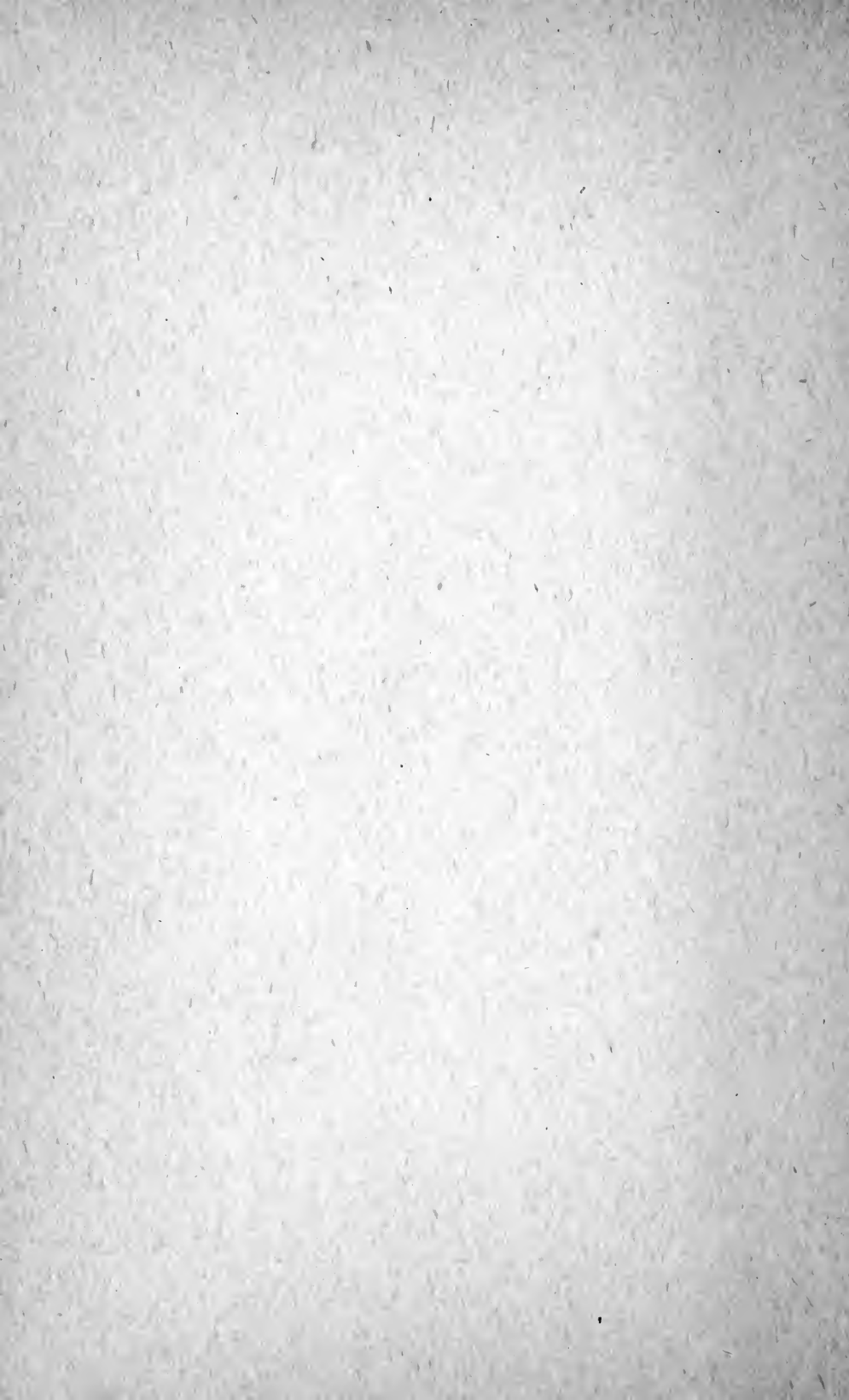
Roared for the handkerchief that caused his pain.
 But see how oft ambitious aims are crossed,
 And chiefs contend till all the prize is lost !
 The lock, obtained with guilt, and kept with pain,
 In ev’ry place is sought, but sought in vain : 155

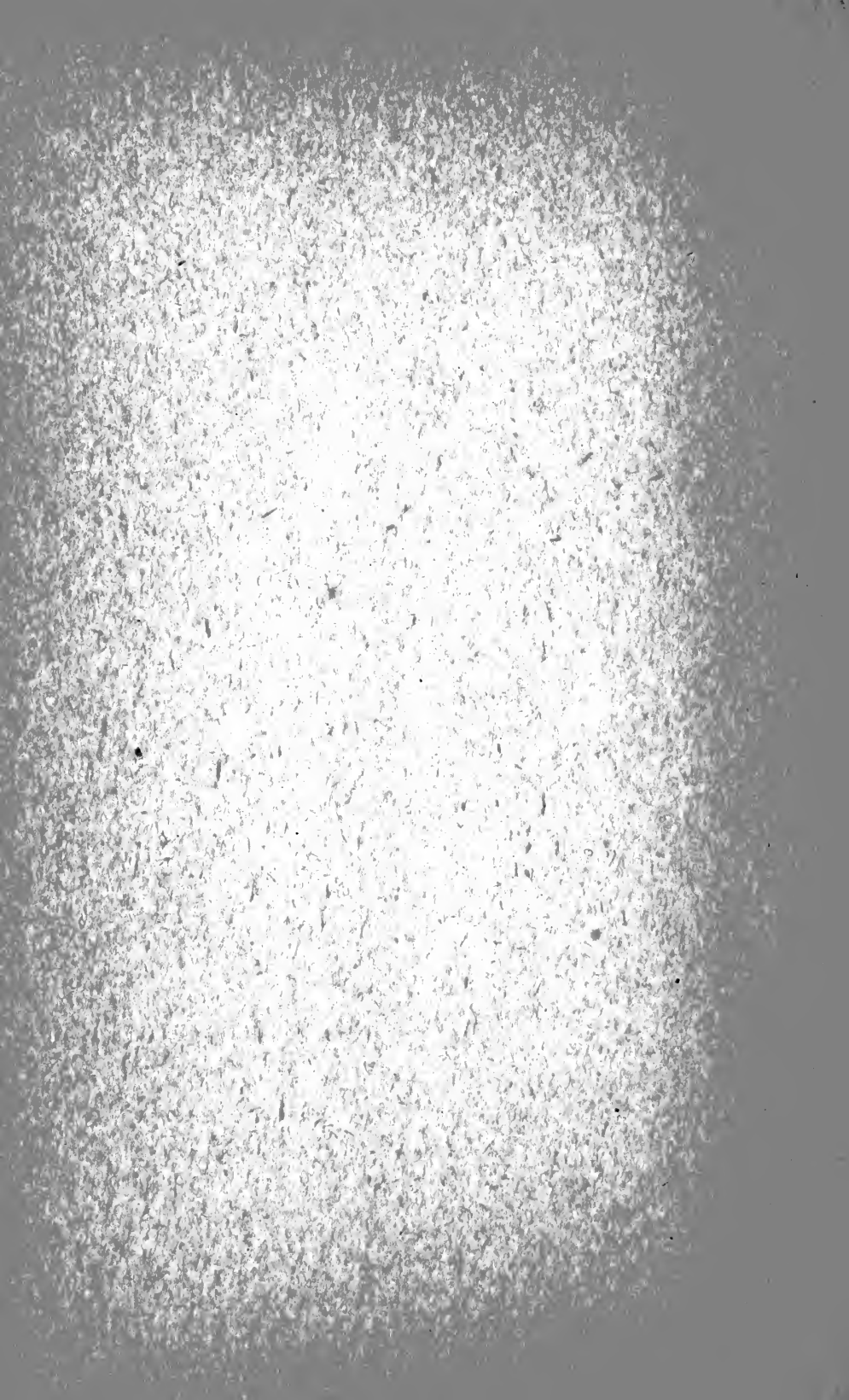
With such a prize no mortal must be blessed,
 So heav’n decrees ! with heav’n who can contest ?
 Some thought it mounted to the lunar sphere,
 Since all that man e’er lost is treasured there.
 There heroes’ wits are kept in pond’rous vases, 160
 And beaux’ in snuff-boxes and tweezer-cases.

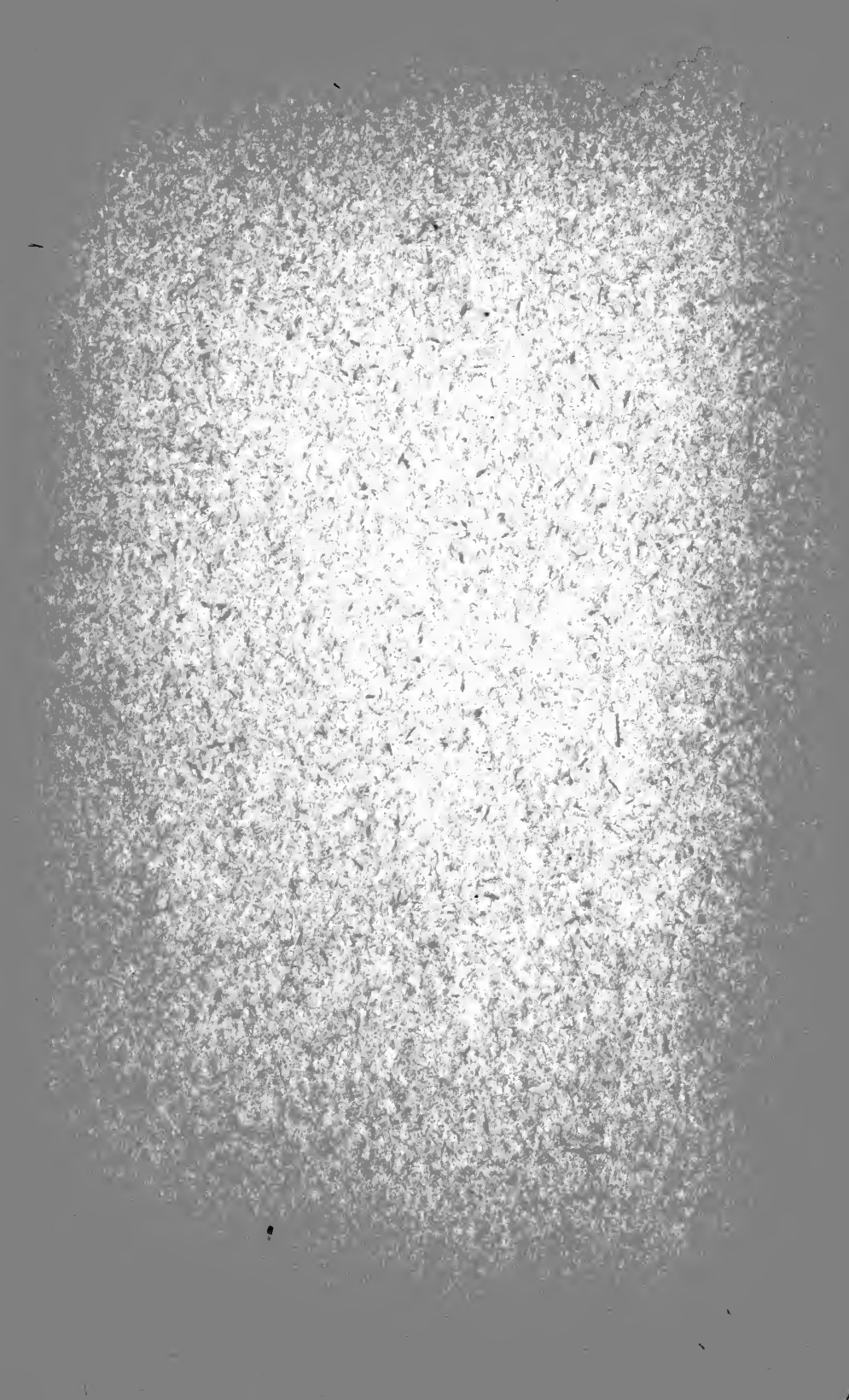
There broken vows, and death-bed alms are found,
 And lovers’ hearts with ends of ribbon bound,
 The courtier’s promises, and sick man’s pray’rs,
 The smiles of harlots, and the tears of heirs, 165
 Cages for gnats, and chains to yoke a flea,
 Dried butterflies, and tomes of casuistry.

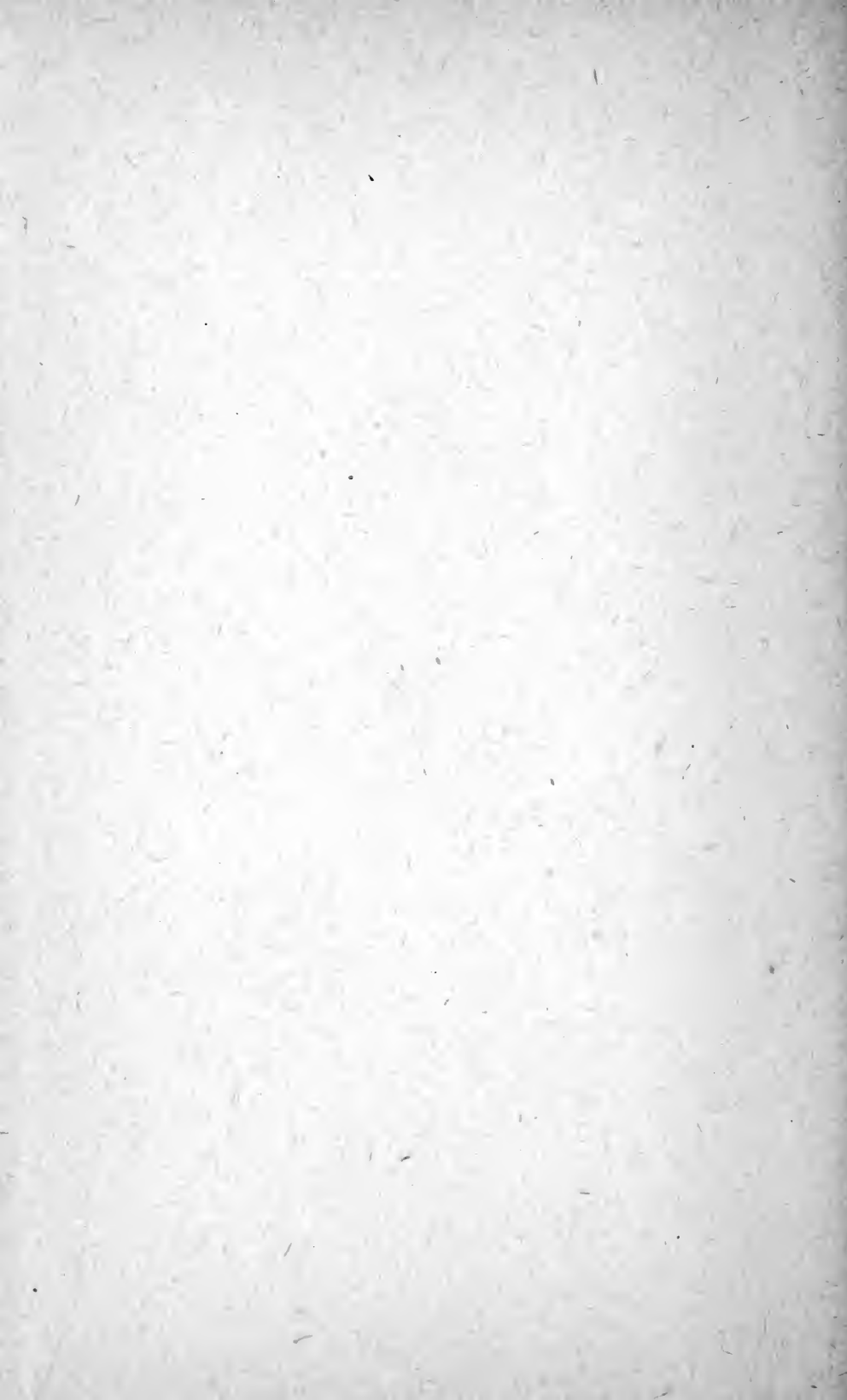
But trust the muse — she saw it upward rise,
 Though marked by none but quick poetic eyes :
 (Thus Rome’s great founder to the heav’ns withdrew, 170
 To Proculus alone confessed in view)
 A sudden star, it shot through liquid air,
 And drew behind a radiant trail of hair.
 Not Berenice’s locks first rose so bright,

- The skies bespangling with dishevelled light. 175
 This the beau monde shall from the Mall survey,
 As through the moonlight shade they nightly stray, }
 And hail with music its propitious ray ;
 This Partridge soon shall view in cloudless skies,
 When next he looks through Galileo's eyes ; 180
 And hence th' egregious wizard shall foredoom
 The fate of Louis, and the fall of Rome.
- Then cease, bright nymph ! to mourn thy ravished hair,
 Which adds new glory to the shining sphere !
 Not all the tresses that fair head can boast, 185
 Shall draw such envy as the lock you lost.
 For after all the murders of your eye,
 When, after millions slain, yourself shall die ;
 When those fair suns shall set, as set they must,
 And all those tresses shall be laid in dust, 190
 This lock the muse shall consecrate to fame,
 And 'midst the stars inscribe Belinda's name.

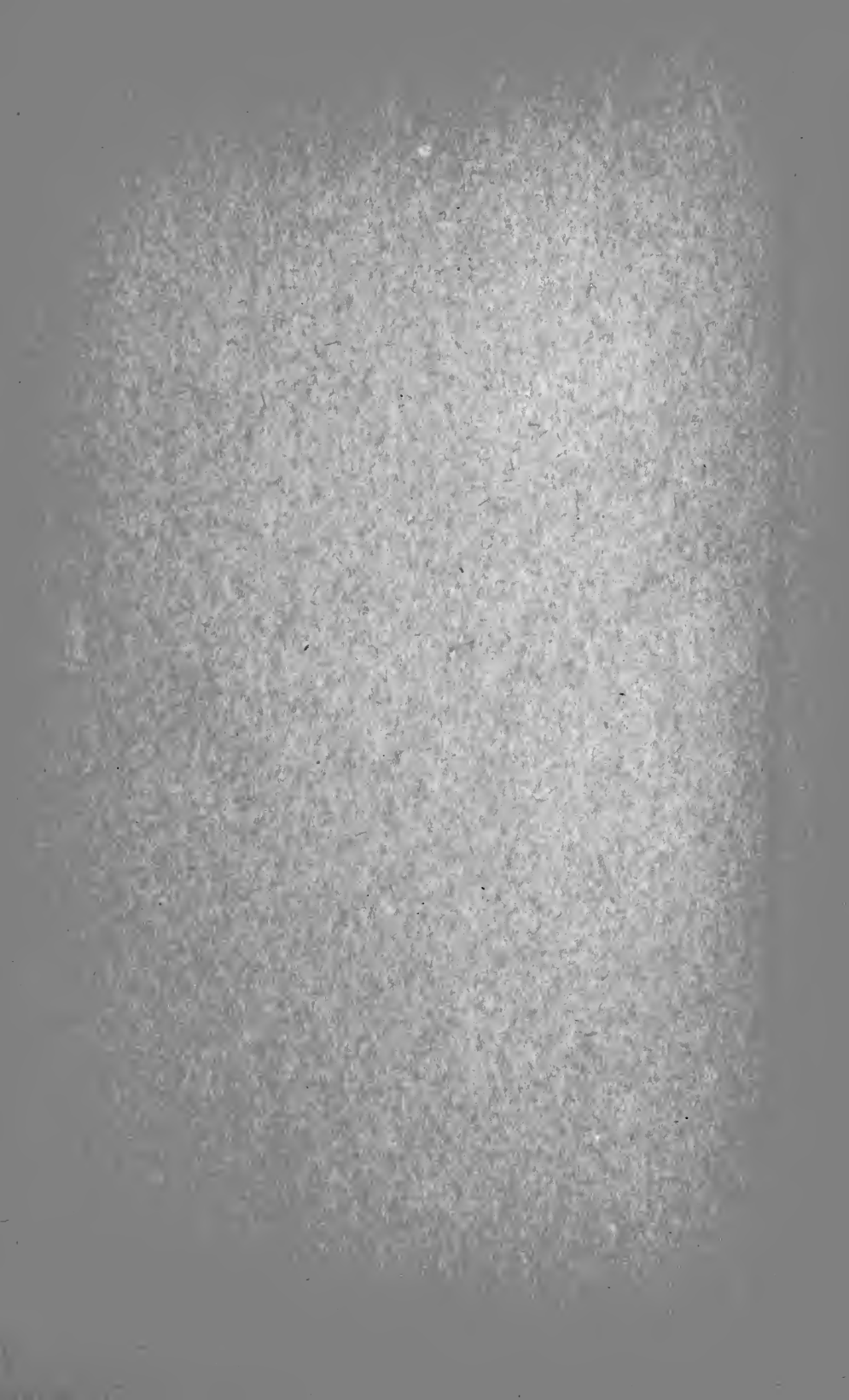


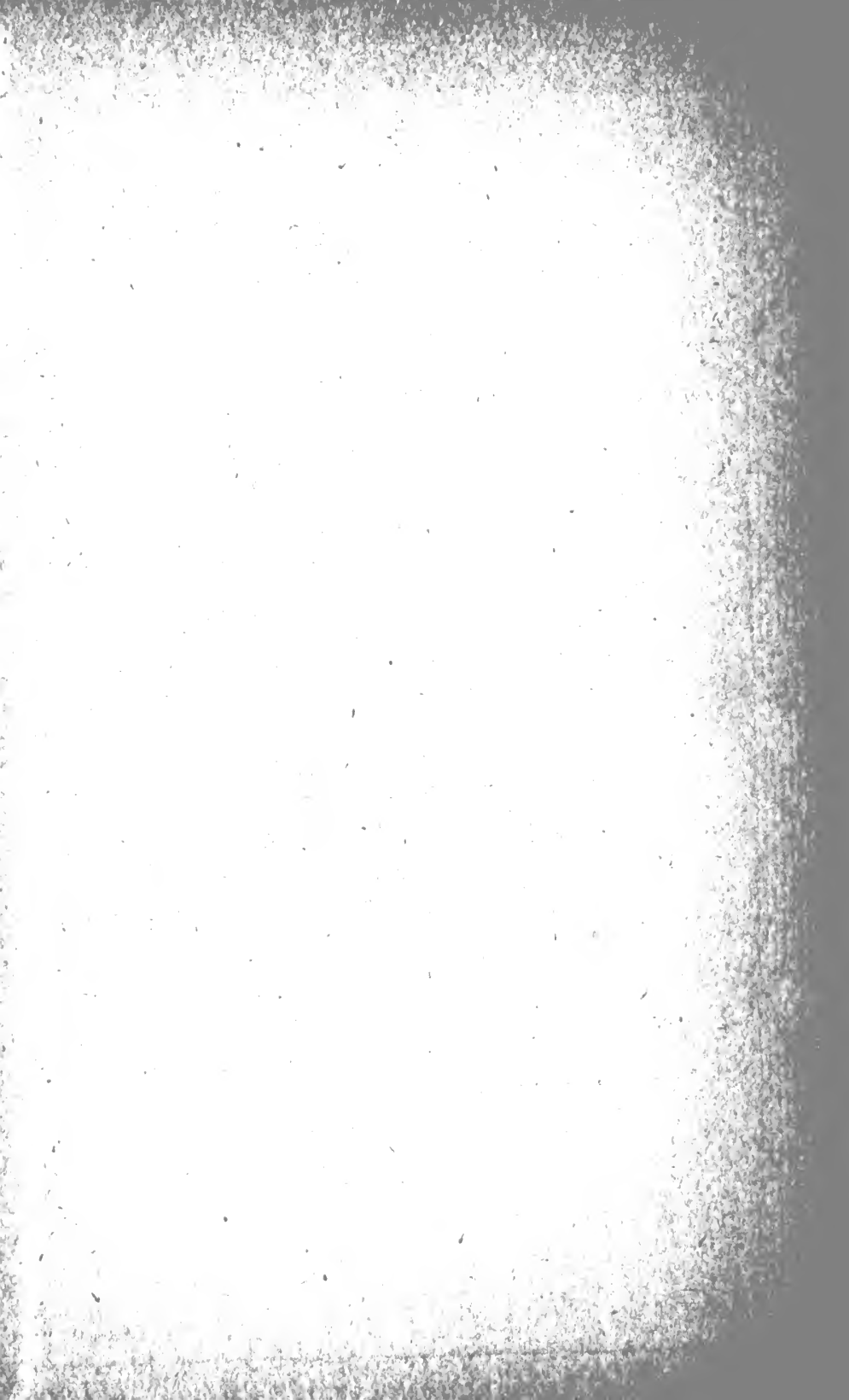






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